Carter's Latest Inflation Flub • Anderson's Third Party Option

John Osborne on Ford's Old Wound • Ursula Le Guin on Doris Lessing

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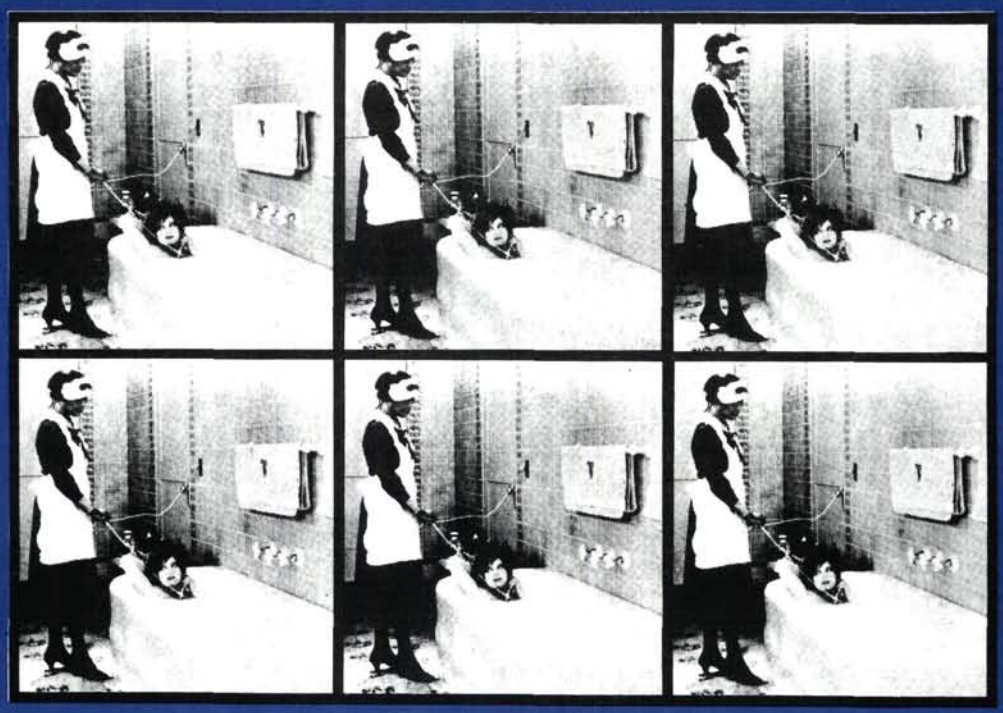

Sticking Up for Campaign Reforms • General Gavin on World War II

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TRB

from Washington ®
March 29, 1980

The System in Crisis

What's the matter with American government? The best answer I have seen so far is James L. Sundquist's concluding chapter in the Brookings Institution symposium, *Setting National Priorities: Agenda for the 1980's* ($8.95 paper). It is clear, plainspoken, brief, and not namby-pamby. He calls it "The Crisis of Confidence in Government." We are not getting as good a government as we deserve, he says. Why?

America is in the midst of another election; millions hope that this time we shall get a leader who will present a reasonable program, overcome the sniping of Congress, ride through the bureaucracy, and make our system work. "But the thesis of this chapter," says Sundquist, "is that the problems of the US government will not be solved by anything so simple as a change of leadership—or the return to office of the incumbent leadership. The American governmental system has built-in structural features that have always presented severe difficulties for any president . . . that will make effective government even more difficult to attain in the 1980s. . . ."

There is an alarming decline of confidence in government. Sundquist quotes poll after poll to show how precipitate it is. I can support him in this. Most of the articles I read reflect disappointment, cynicism, and alienation. The people want government to control events, says Sundquist, and they go on insisting that elections make a difference. "Each time an election does not," he adds, "it adds to the disillusionment."

So now we are going through the old presidential cycle again. We will give another call to somebody. "The mandate is granted essentially to one person, the president" notes Sundquist, "but it can be executed only through the collaboration of three separate institutions—the president, the Senate and the House—elected from different constituencies and free to exercise their powers independently." Two-thirds of the senators won't run. Many who are elected, even in the same party, don't share the president's views. Possibly Congress, or one branch of it, will belong to a different party, as happened from 1955 through 1960, and 1969 through 1976.

There have been five recent trends, Sundquist notes, all interrelated, that have helped to create confusion: the disintegration of the political parties; the "popularization" of presidential nominations (by that he means all those 37 primaries); the rejection by Congress of presidential leadership; the fragmentation of authority within Congress itself; and "the gradual deterioration of administrative capability."

Let's take Point One. The decline of the party has been noted since David S. Broder's admirable book *The Party's Over* (Harper & Row, 1972). Sundquist comments that "Parties are even giving up the business of campaigning; candidates are marketed through television by advertising specialists." He adds that with the increasing predominance of personality over party, "the odds are close to fifty-fifty that in January, 1981, the country will enter another four years of divided government and its accompanying incessant conflict." (In short, if Reagan gets the nod he'll probably have a Democratic Congress.)

Point Two is the increasingly "haphazard presidential selection." Sundquist notes that only in the US do the people make the actual nominations. And here I would like to put in a comment. Top rank political scientists like Sundquist practically never come right out and say that the US is alone in its system, that the flexible parliamentary procedure (with mercifully short elections) is virtually universal among all other modern democracies. Canadian voters don't pick Trudeau or Clark as leaders, for example; the parties do. American students are shy and diffident: they hate to compare the US with other democracies; perhaps they think it would be rude or unpatriotic. Sundquist merely notes that in America there has been a recent change in the nominating process. "Previously an elite of party leaders performed a screening function" in picking candidates, generally at party conventions. Now voters do it themselves in the primaries. That would make the founding fathers gasp: they thought they had arranged a neat little elite to pick suitable presidents in the Electoral College.

Point Three: "Rejection of presidential leadership." Congress has been feeling its oats—war powers, budget process, impoundment control, legislative veto, expansion of oversight activities. In brief, it's hard to know who's in charge here, as in the current struggle over inflation.

Point Four: "Limitation on Congressional Leadership." Congress can't govern and yet the president is often balked at too. This extends into foreign affairs. Congress has reversed the president on half a dozen big foreign issues and done it, not coherently, but "on a piecemeal basis, emotionally, under the pressure of constituency groups at home, sometimes almost whimsically. . . ." A hell of a way to run a railroad.

Sundquist, in passing, notes that the character of congressmen has changed; they are a new breed: "self-selected, self-organized, self-propelled, self-reliant." Committee chairmen have lost power, the seniority system has withered. With dispersal of power has come the new individualism.

Point Five is labeled "Deterioration of Administrative Competence." This is a subject that is more subtle than the others, and more difficult to prove. There is the implicit comparison with other countries: it is astonishing, the author feels, that "establishing professionalism and continuity in governmental management, on the European model, is not even on the agenda of public issues."

The politicizing of management in the government has been growing steadily, Sundquist feels. The US is "unique" in this regard. "Other countries severely restrict the number of political appointees placed at the head of executive departments." Not the United States.

Sundquist is cool and doesn't carp. We can thank him that, at the end of his chapter, he omits the usual obligatory platitudes of hope and prayer. There is indeed a "crisis of competence in government." Americans are worried. Other chapters in this valuable 563-page book deal with other problems. The tone is set in Joseph A. Pechman's introductory summary: the major step in restoring competence in government, he thinks, is to stop blaming particular leaders for what goes wrong and to look, for a change, at the system itself. A system, I might add, that is quaint, ancient, and unlike any other.

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Correspondence

Vive La France

To the editors:

Henry Fairlie's diatribe against France ("France's Madonna Complex," *TNR*, March 15), is a remarkable display of superannuated British Gallophobia, bloated chutzpah, ignorance, and not a little envy. To someone for whom the French obviously remain Britain's hereditary enemies, it must be galling to observe that France, crushed in World War II, apparently decadent and stagnant before the war, and deeply divided after it, has succeeded in establishing a stable regime, in becoming the second strongest economy in Western Europe, in defining an autonomous and reasonably successful foreign policy of its own, and in building the world's largest nuclear force, while Britain has become one of the poorest members of the Common Market, has reaped few benefits from a foreign policy of dependence on the US, and worries whether the US will provide her with a means to prolong the life of her nuclear deterrent.

Yes, De Gaulle was a difficult partner in the EEC. But—despite or through his methods—it was he who got the EEC to adopt most of the common policies that have made of the Common Market an effective entity, whereas Britain's behavior since her entry into the EEC and her recurrent attempts at renegotiating the terms of her admission have made even cynical anti-Gaullists on the Continent ask themselves whether the general wasn't right after all in questioning Britain's readiness to join. And yes, the French have been difficult allies for the US. But in the present crisis, as in many previous ones, France's role has been to make explicit reservations about American policy which are shared by other European countries, including Britain, but which these nations' leaders do not dare raise openly.

I will not try to challenge Fairlie's grotesque account of French history. But he might be reminded of the fact that in World War I, a nation of 38 million resisted a major German onslaught despite the occupation of most of its industrial areas, with only a comparatively limited participation of Britain's forces; and while American troops helped immeasurably in the final victory, it was France that produced most of the weapons for them. He might be asked about the wisdom of Britain's policy toward France between the wars, when London first believed that France was more of a threat than Germany, later obstinately persisted in appeasing the Nazis, and sent only minimal forces to France before the German invasion. He might also be queried about Britain's post-war delusions, which kept her from taking part in, and in fact led her to try to stop, the European experiment in integration at a time when France was most eager for the English to join.

Everything Fairlie says, self righteously, about the French, has been said at one time or another by the French about the British. He obviously has not heard of the mote and the mole. His demonstration of anachronistic chauvinism makes me doubt that Fairlie ever forgave the French not only for the French Revolution (alas, he is no Burke), but also for Joan of Arc.

Stanley Hoffmann
Professor of Government
Chairman, Center for European Studies
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cancel my subscription

To the editors:

I was saddened to see your magazine print such venomous bilge as the piece "France's Madonna Complex" spewed forth by your contributing editor, Henry Fairlie.

I renewed my subscription only last week. Please cancel and refund at once.

J. A. de Francesco
Woodruff, South Carolina

Israel's religious life

To the editors:

Martin Peretz travels in the wrong circles when he goes to Israel. His blast at the Israeli religious establishment (Jerusalem Diarist, *TNR*, March 8) is a caricature, and by implication drags down all of Israeli religious life. I have lived in an all-Orthodox Israeli city of 75,000 whose police force had nothing to do because there was no theft, no domestic fighting, no drugs, no killing. Of course, religious life in Israel is far from perfect. But Israel today is a society in search of its roots, and numerous Israelis are finding this yearning fulfilled not in the secular pursuit of Western materialism, but in a return to Judaic sources. And they have perceived within the religious community the deep idealism, true kindness, dedicated scholarship, and day-to-day goodness that is the essence of Jewish religious life.

Peretz may attack Israeli religious politicians and he has a right to call the shots as he sees them, but he should make clear that Judaism as a religion is not responsible for those who claim piety, and that religious life in Israel is flourishing and thriving in many ways that would make even Martin Peretz happy.

Next time he goes to Israel, let him travel in the right (not in the left) circles.

Rabbi Emanuel Feldman
Congregation Beth Jacob
Atlanta, Georgia

Ad nauseam

To the editors:

M.E.K. (Washington Diarist, March 15) has not watched commercial television lately, or he could not have written seriously about his "annoyance that it was 'pledge week'" for public TV. Let him refresh his memory with a six-month interval of the alternative: the bursts of hard sells wedged in at the seller's convenience, propounding the salient points of particular brands of menstruation gear, extolling the most effective gastritis remedies, selling help for embarrassingly slipping dentures, peddling panty hose, dog food, cat food, breath deodorizers, and gentle laxatives. (I know because I sometimes watch the news.)

It is hard to say which is more nauseating, the advertisements or the programs. Give me the fund-raising bouts any time and I'll be more than grateful for them.

I wonder if M.E.K. has paid his pledge this year.

Coral Tait
Wichita, Kansas

Note: Yes, M.E.K. has paid his pledge, specifically in order to carp without qualms.

Overdue process

To the editors:

In his review of Paul Murphy's *World War I and the Origin of Civil Liberties in the United States* (*TNR*, March 8), Nat Hentoff states that "it was not until 1925 that the Supreme Court finally declared that the Bill of Rights, through the due process clause of the 14th Amendment, applied to the states as well as the federal

(continued on page 40)

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Cover: Scene from Eve's Lover, 1925. Article on page 18.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

March 29, 1980

Inflation, 3; Carter, 0

President Carter's latest inflation plan, his fourth, comes wrapped in the same expressions of certitude and confidence as his first three. This time, he insists, he really has got it right. Not that the three failures are acknowledged, of course. In his own eyes, Jimmy Carter is ever the new broom sweeping clean.

The centerpiece of this month's scheme, and typical of the whole in its emphasis on symbol over substance, is a promise to balance the federal budget for fiscal year 1981. This promise is meaningless for two reasons: first, it probably won't be kept; and second, it won't affect inflation whether it's kept or not.

The fiscal 1981 budget Carter sent to Congress in January forecast a $16-billion deficit. He now proposes to raise three billion additional dollars by withholding taxes on interest and dividend payments, the same way taxes now are withheld from workers' paychecks. He asks us to take his word for it that $13 billion will be chopped from spending, thus balancing the budget. Carter says the congressional leadership has agreed to cooperate (which he drolly describes as "a remarkable event, truly historic in the development of our nation"). But the details, he says, are still being worked out. Given the records of the Carter administration and the 96th Congress, this is quite a "but." The process of caving in to various entrenched groups already is under way. If our leaders do agree on $13 billion to cut, most of it will come not from price supports to farmers or Pentagon flab, but from government services like Saturday mail delivery and from the pitiful remains of Carter's social initiatives like the youth jobs program. And of course the $16-billion figure is only Carter's estimate. Most outsiders examining his January budget predicted that the deficit actually would be much higher, meaning that $16 billion in cuts and new revenue won't bring the budget into balance anyway.

More to the point, there is no magic attached to a balanced federal budget. The federal deficit is just one number among many. It does not reflect, for example, that government in general, including state and local budgets, already is running a modest surplus. But it also does not reflect government-sponsored loans and loan guarantees (to failing auto companies, students, exporters, and so on) that have the same fiscal effect as federal spending deficits. The *Wall Street Journal* estimates that these new debts will increase by $60 billion in fiscal 1981. The point of balancing the budget is to avoid stimulating an already overheated economy. But in a three-trillion-dollar economy, the effect of $16 billion one way or another is simply trivial.

Part two of Carter's new plan is, in effect, a 10-cents-a-gallon gasoline tax (on top of the four-cents-a-gallon federal tax already imposed). This is achieved through a tricky maneuver involving an oil import fee and a complicated entitlements program. The reason for such indirection is that Carter already has the authority to impose import controls; he says that he will ask Congress to replace the present complicated arrangement with a straightforward 14-cents-a-gallon tax, which will rise with further price increases. Mean-

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while, however, the tax is in effect, and will start appearing at gas pumps in the middle of May.

This country desperately needs a gasoline tax or rationing in order to reduce immediately our consumption of oil. The short-term effect of Carter's new gas tax will be to *increase* inflation by about half a percentage point, but we must get our neck out of the noose. No one who has observed the cowardice of Congress in energy matters can blame Carter for sidestepping the need for congressional approval. Indeed, it took a bit of political courage on his part to take responsibility alone. But there are two problems with Carter's gas tax. First, it is farcically small. It leaves the federal tax at less, as a percentage of sales, than when the oil crisis began in 1973. Drivers can absorb 10-cents-a-gallon price increases these days without even blinking. A really stiff jolt to gasoline consumers, and a reassuring message to our allies, would require a tax of 50 cents or even a dollar. The second problem is that Carter has no plans to rebate the tax revenues, which he estimates at $10 billion for fiscal 1981. He swears he will balance the budget without counting this little nest egg, but some skepticism is justified. Revenues from the windfall profits tax, which this journal supported for reasons of equity, not to give the government more money, have disappeared into the budget without a trace. (Energy Impact Assistance, one of the intended beneficiaries of the windfall tax revenues, is high on the list for further cuts.) A stiff gasoline tax that is rebated penny for penny, either directly or through Social Security as John Anderson suggests, is precisely the same as rationing in theory, and far easier to administer in practice. But no one will believe that the government is only trying to influence our behavior, not to increase our taxes, if it doesn't give the money back.

The only part of Carter's new program that is likely to have any real impact is the complicated credit controls he has authorized the Federal Reserve Board to impose. Inflationary expectations have led people into a frenzy of borrowing in order to spend money now and then pay it back when it's worthless. This keeps the economy overstimulated when, by all traditional signals—rising unemployment, declining real income—it should be cooling off. Carter's purpose is to make consumer spending more difficult, and to channel the available credit toward productive investment. Of course he didn't dare suggest the simplest and most sensible way to do this, which would be to end the tax deductibility of consumer interest payments. The various gimmicks he has chosen to burden the use of credit cards and checking account cash reserves will have partially the same effect, though they will work arbitrarily and no doubt unfairly in many individual cases.

Along with credit cards and other debt mechanisms, the Federal Reserve Board also placed a burdensome reserve requirement on new investments in so-called money market mutual funds. This cannot be explained as an effort to slow consumer spending, since the effect will be exactly the opposite. Money market funds have encouraged *savings* by giving moderate-income people their only hope for a return on their money that at least approaches the rate of inflation (before taxes, of course). The only possible reason for this Federal Reserve action is to drive such people back to their local Savings and Loans, where they will have to settle for seven percent interest, less than half the inflation rate. This is a bizarre and unfair exception to the Federal Reserve's tough policy of high interest rates and damn the consequences. Wealthier people, those with more than $10,000 to invest, still will be able to get 15 percent directly from the US government, by buying Treasury bills.

The saddest part of Carter's latest inflation package is his reaffirmation of wage and price guidelines. The staff of the Council on Wage and Price Stability will be tripled, the rules for reporting price changes will be made more complex, but the whole exercise will remain "voluntary," and therefore silly. President Carter said March 14: "Controls create inequities. . . . On the other hand, voluntary wage and price restraints offer the flexibility we need to deal with our complex economy." But the people who ignore voluntary guidelines are not the same ones who would be hurt by controls. Quite the contrary. As we have written ("Time for Controls?" *TNR*, February 23), "You can't have it both ways. To the extent guidelines work, they create the same problems as controls; to the extent they avoid those problems, they don't work." If the government expects people to show wage and price restraint, the only sensible and equitable system is a mandatory one. If the president and his advisers shy away from controls (and there are good reasons to do so), they should drop the whole guidelines exercise.

Carter claims there is a fifth part to his new inflation plan, involving "Economic Structural Changes to encourage productivity, savings, research and development," but this is a phantom. There will be a "renewed appeal to Congress" to pass bills deregulating various industries and lifting interest rate ceilings for small savers. These are all sound, but minor, and nothing new. Carter will ask the Presidential Commission for a National Agenda for the Eighties to "develop specific recommendations for revitalizing our economy's productivity." Safe enough. And he will propose tax changes to spur productivity after the budget is balanced, which is to say after the election.

It doesn't require a national commission of gilded roosters to propose the structural changes that would reduce inflation and increase productivity. What it requires is political courage, a rare commodity. President Carter apparently exhausted his own courage with that itsy-bitsy gasoline tax. Without fundamental structural changes, the only way you can slow inflation is by causing or deepening a recession. This is essentially what Carter proposes to do with his budget and credit actions. Economists of the left and

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the right now agree that the trade-off between recession and inflation gets worse all the time, and that relying on one to cure the other assures that both will continue to deepen in the long run. In January 1979 we predicted a recession that would hold inflation down to seven percent. Now it clearly will take a very deep recession just to bring inflation back below double digits. Then the cycle will start again, unless we find ourselves leaders who will do something about it.

'I'll Never Lie to You'

Q. Mr. President . . . With your efforts to balance the budget will you continue to favor those particular cities and persons within those cities who favor your reelection?
THE PRESIDENT: We have never favored any person or cities who favored my reelection.

—*President Carter's press conference, March 14*

WHITE HOUSE SPURS FUNDS FOR FLORIDA

. . . a White House official deeply involved in the disbursement of Federal grants acknowledged that the flow to Florida has not been a result of happenstance. "If it was in the pipeline and it was for Florida, people took a look at it and if it was in the right place and it was the right subject and someone was coming down from Washington, it was highlighted and expedited," the official said. . . .

On a Presidential swing through the West last spring, when Mr. Carter announced Federal grants at every stop, Jody Powell, the President's press secretary, was asked the purpose of the announcements.

"That's how a President campaigns," Mr. Powell said with a grin.

—The *New York Times*, October 7

PRESIDENTIAL POWER HELPS CARTER WIN NEW YORK SUPPORT

. . . It is no coincidence that mayors, as a group, are the most decidedly pro-Carter, at least in this state. Cabinet officials and Carter campaign aides are blatantly talking about how much Federal money is available to cities.

"We have nothing to lose by going with Carter and getting what we can from him," said an upstate mayor who asked not to be identified.

—The *New York Times*, November 27

In arriving at his decision, Representative Rangel said, progress on an international trade complex in Harlem, which is in his district, was "not really the sole influencing factor."

What he considered, Mr. Rangel said, was "the Administration's continuing interest in the problems of my district." He said he expected that interest to continue beyond the $30 million that the Federal government has committed as one third of the total cost of the Harlem trade center.

—The *New York Times*, November 30

. . . Harford County Executive J. Thomas Barranger, who has spent the last several months pushing Senator Kennedy. "I have a couple of federal grants hanging," he said. "I want to see what happens to them before I jump one way or the other."

—The *Baltimore Sun*, January 11

President Carter and his supporters in Washington's business community are using the federal treasury, patronage jobs and the lure of campaign contributions to lock up endorsements from virtually every top elected leader of the Democratic Party in the District of Columbia.

Mayor Marion Barry, whose recommendations for key federal jobs have been delayed by the White House because of Barry's low-profile public support for Carter's reelection, formally endorsed the president yesterday. . . .

White House sources said yesterday that Barry's formal endorsement could expedite selection of a new chairman for the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corp., which has been without a chairman for more than two months. Part of the delay, sources have said, was due to public uncertainty about the support for Carter by Barry and his nominee for the post. . . .

Over the last several months, the Carter administration has courted Barry with millions of dollars in federal grants . . .

At yesterday's press conference, however, Barry said that his support was not linked to the additional resources granted the city. "I'm not looking for any specific handouts of any kind," the mayor said. "It would probably take all the oil (money) in Saudi Arabia and Iran combined to buy my vote."

—The *Washington Post*, January 22

Charlene Drew Jarvis, the Ward 4 council member who also felt the White House pressure, is a good deal more candid about her endorsement of Carter. "I'm not like the mayor; I *can* be bought," she said.

—The *Washington Post*, January 25

If I ever lie to you, don't vote for me.

—*James Earl Carter*, New York Daily News, *September 17, 1976*

White House Watch

The Unhealing Wound

At the end of an interview with Gerald Ford on January 2, 1977, flying from Colorado to Washington, he asked me to turn off my tape recorder and talked as he never had about the hurt that his defeat by Jimmy Carter had done him. It was his last trip as President aboard Air Force One and the beginning of the last of everything for him as a President who had been appointed Vice

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President, had succeeded a disgraced Richard Nixon, and the previous November had been defeated for election by Jimmy Carter. Nothing that he said was to be quoted, but it was clear that the defeat had inflicted a wound that never would heal.

It didn't occur to me then and I don't think it occurred to Ford that he might try to heal the wound by election to the presidency in 1980. Now his fatally late effort to do it is over. There can be no doubt that the wound of defeat and a hope of healing it, never really dead until he said March 15 that he was not and would not be a candidate, drove him to and through the fortnight of pleading, indecision, and humiliation that began with a front-page interview in the March 2 *New York Times*.

The chief of the *Times* Washington news bureau, William Kovach, and one of its political reporters, Adam Clymer, concluded in early February that Ford must be near a decision about 1980. Since late 1978, there had been reports of meetings with advisers who were for and against his going for the 1980 nomination. The last publicized meeting of the kind had occurred last fall, and there had been two other private ones since then. Clymer requested an interview and, given no immediate answer, asked that nobody else get one before he did. Clymer was invited to Ford's retirement home in Rancho Mirage, a lush appendage of Palm Springs, for an interview on March 1. The lead story in the next day's *Times* began: "Former President Gerald Ford said today that Ronald Reagan could not win the nomination and cautiously invited the Republican Party to ask him to run again for President." Clymer quoted Ford: "If there was an honest to goodness, bona fide urging by a broad based group in my party, I would respond. As of today, my party hasn't asked me."

In ways that would have been meaningful to Ford, the party never did. That in essence is why, after a final meeting with some of his people at Rancho Mirage, he announced on March 15 that "I am not a candidate" and "I will not become a candidate." For the Republican nomination, he seemed to mean. He did not exactly say that. For the presidency, he could have meant, a disavowal that would be automatically voided if he were nominated. It seems idle, it probably is idle, to dangle the suggestion now. But the advisory core around Ford is loaded with people, some of them ex-Reaganites, who believe that Ronald Reagan is unfit by age, talent, and temperament to be President of the United States; that he is unelectable; and that, irresistible as his lead for the party nomination appears to be, his vulnerabilities may become sufficiently apparent to enough Republicans to do him out of the nomination at the July convention. Richard Nixon wrote that after his preferences for the vice presidency in 1973—John Connally, Nelson Rockefeller, and Ronald Reagan—were ruled out, "this left Jerry Ford." It may be said of the far-out speculation just noted, "that leaves Jerry Ford." The thought is in the minds of some of his advisers. There is no reason to believe it's in Ford's mind or to disbelieve his March 15 statement that "I will support the nominee of my party with all the energy I have." He'd previously tried to soften the impact of his assertion to the *Times* that Reagan is too conservative to be elected by saying he'd meant to say that Reagan is *perceived* to be too conservative. A difference, sure, but not much of a difference.

After some interim talk that he could win the nomination on the first convention ballot despite a late start, Ford visited Washington. The optimistic mood and talk abruptly vanished. Ford made the customary call of ex-Presidents upon Carter, conferred with six Ford advisers, told a Republican congressional fund-raising dinner that "the nation is in peril" because of Carter weaknesses and policies, and indicated to a breakfast group of reporters that the session with his advisers had mightily discouraged him. What most discouraged him, evidently, was the thundering absence of any call from "a broad based group" of Republicans for him to go for the nomination.

Three advisers at the Washington meeting were former Virginia congressman and former Ford assistant John Marsh, Wyoming congressman and former Ford White House staff chief Richard Cheney, and former Air Force secretary Thomas Reed. Reed had organized a sadly unsuccessful "draft-Ford" committee to generate the call to party duty that Ford so desperately wanted. Marsh had hoped Ford would go for the nomination, but only if the party call came loud and clear. Cheney felt that Ford had waited too long; that two years ago or a year ago or even six months ago he could have declared himself a candidate with good hope of success. A seventh attendant at the Washington meeting, the chief of Ford's small retirement staff and former military aide ex-Army major Robert Barrett, had been pressing and pressing Ford to run. He proposed in Washington, and renewed the proposal at a final meeting in California, that Ford skip most of the party primaries still open to him, concentrate on a few friendly states such as his home state of Michigan, and go into the convention with a group of delegates that would be small at best but still big enough to rally around if Reagan faltered.

Ford, obviously reflecting the impact of the meeting, said three times, "I don't want to give the impression that I'm just a spoiler." He said he didn't want to tear the party apart and deprive it of whatever chance it has of victory in November. He spoke, without discernible bitterness, of politicians who "hedge their bets." He mentioned politicans who'd invited him to campaign for them but hadn't urged him to give them another chance to campaign for him. He had in mind, one may guess, the people whose attitude at the advisory meetings was described by one of them as follows: "You didn't find people around Ford saying, look, this is what you ought to do. You'd find people saying, look, here's both sides of it, you must make up your own mind." Events suggest that Ford got sick of that.

The congressional fund-raising dinner could not

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have been any more encouraging than the advisory meeting was. The dinner was not an occasion for espousal of individuals. Yet there could have been a note of enthusiasm for Ford that was not heard. The dinner chairman, former Ford staff chief Donald Rumsfeld, was running as an uncommitted delegate in Illinois and therefore couldn't publicly espouse any one candidate. He concentrated on money for congressional candidates. Congressman Guy Vander Jagt of Michigan, a Ford friend who introduced him, is a member of the House Republican leadership and (a spokesman said) thereby debarred from anything close to recommending in his introductory remarks that Ford enter the race. Ford's attacks on Jimmy Carter and his record were applauded. Ford the potential candidate was not.

Ford was shaken by much that he heard in Washington but not, it seemed to those who talked with him and advised him, to the point of deciding to stay out. Some of them were sure as late as Friday night and Saturday morning that he would "go"—the operative word for entering the race. One of the advisers in all the meetings bet his wife that Ford would and then that he wouldn't and then, before he flew to California for the Saturday meeting, warned her that he might change again. When Ford drove away from his White House meeting with Jimmy Carter, he signed in the limousine papers that would have to be filed if he were to qualify for the upcoming Ohio primary. Ford ordered Barrett and Larry Speakes, a former Ford press assistant who was helping out, to make it clear to the Ohio authorities that he wasn't committing himself to anything; signing the papers was just precautionary.

This report concludes with a comparison of the Washington and final California meetings. Some of the participants probably would think it off in some details and perhaps in major respects. I find it revealing and believable, so far as it goes, and skip the qualifications that normally would obstruct it.

The Washington meeting was a usual, nitty-gritty sort. It was concerned with the chances of Gerald Ford, candidate, to win the nomination. His electability and Jimmy Carter's defeatability were hardly mentioned. Kennedy? My informants didn't recall any mention of him. Ford wanted to know the mathematics of the delegate count, who might join in a draft, who might join up if and after he were drafted, etc. He heard proposals and counter-proposals of how a campaign for the nomination should be run. On the whole, as he indicated to the Washington reporters the next morning, it was pretty bleak.

Ford was in part responsible for the change in tone Saturday at Rancho Mirage. He'd summoned John Deardourff and Douglas Bailey, TV and media specialists; John Marsh; Stuart Spencer, his 1976 campaign chairman; and Thomas Reed. Robert Teeter, his 1976 poller, had been invited but was asked at the last minute to stay with a continuing political chore in Washington. Bob Barrett first told Larry Speakes in Washington to be around by Sunday, then during the Saturday meeting telephoned Speakes to hold everything—"there's a lot of turning and tossing at this meeting." James B. Schuman, another former Ford press staffer, had come out from Michigan in order, he thought until Saturday afternoon, to set up a motel press room for a big announcement after the Illinois primary results were known on Wednesday. Alan Greenspan, who'd been chairman of Ford's Council of Economic Advisers and happened to be visiting Rancho Mirage, also was present. So was Leon Parma, a Palm Springs businessman and friend of Ford's.

The change of tone that Ford induced was this meeting's intense and emotional preoccupation with two men and their responsibility to and for the country—former President Gerald Ford and President Jimmy Carter. Ford pressed upon the group his view that Jimmy Carter is a total and complete disaster, at home and abroad, and that with four more years of him the US may face domestic and foreign crises of incredible magnitude. Therefore the important question before the group was not who was nominated by the Republicans, but the defeat and replacement of Carter. Corollary questions were what former President Ford might do to the Republican party and to his chances of helping the country in disaster if he split the party by entering now. He might so weaken Reagan that he wouldn't have *any* chance of replacing Carter. Ford might in the process weaken himself and his capacity for alternative leadership. Ford did not use these apocolyptic terms alone. Others did, too, as the meeting heated up. People who have acted as if they have no confidence in Ronald Reagan concluded with Ford that the country couldn't be worse off and could be better off with President Reagan.

Something is missing here and I think I know what it is. Gerald Ford can't bear the thought of another wound.

John Osborne

Politics

Anderson's Option

Awful as the Carter-Reagan choice seems to be, after the Illinois primary there is practically nothing standing in its way.

Edward Kennedy not only was defeated in Illinois; he was devastated, rejected by practically every group that could have given his candidacy any hope for survival. He lost in the city of Chicago by two to one, and even

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the Cook County Democratic machine could not give him more than 13 of the city's 49 Democratic convention delegates. According to Associated Press-NBC polling data, Kennedy lost among blacks by nearly three to one, 71 percent to 28. Among Catholics, he lost 60 to 33; among Irish-Americans, 61 to 33; among blue-collar workers, 69 to 28. And even Jews, who are livid with Carter, rejected Kennedy by 47 percent to 37 percent. Some Kennedy aides have tried to blame Chicago mayor Jane Byrne for the disaster, but her unpopularity only added to Kennedy's problems. The fact is that voters do not want Edward Kennedy to be president and are willing to stomach even Jimmy Carter as the alternative. Even if Kennedy should somehow win in New York and even if Carter's popularity should continue to fall, it is all but impossible to see how Kennedy's challenge could revive itself.

The Republican contest is likely to continue through New York and Connecticut next week and on through Wisconsin April 1, but Illinois did nearly mortal injury to Reagan's two surviving opponents, George Bush and John Anderson. In retrospect, it seems clear that Bush failed to capitalize on the notoriety he achieved by winning the Iowa caucuses. Just when people began paying attention to him, he decided to play safe, ignore issues, and hope that Carteresque platitudes would carry him through. Bush tried to reverse course in Illinois, bashing Anderson and emphasizing policy positions, but it was too late. Bush tumbled to 11 percent in Illinois, not very much higher in voter esteem than the three percent he was scoring in national polls before Iowa. He may partially recover in Connecticut, once his home state, but there seems little future for Bush when the campaign moves on to Reagan's territory in the west.

There was little enough basis for an Anderson candidacy in the Republican party to begin with, and Anderson's defeat in his home state has all but undermined what there was. Anderson hoped to win the nomination by attracting huge numbers of independents and Democrats in GOP primaries. He did that in Illinois, but it was not enough. Anderson's independent-mindedness, his liberal stance on social issues, and his dubious party loyalty energized Republican regulars, who supported Reagan 59 percent to 26 percent for Anderson. And Anderson attracted not only liberal-minded, well-educated independents into the GOP primary, but conservatives, right-to-lifers, and blue-collar voters as well. Among independent crossover voters, an AP-NBC poll showed, Anderson received a plurality, but a tiny one—only 47 percent to Reagan's 40 percent. Anderson had hoped to sweep the crossover states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Indiana and achieve enough momentum to score breakthroughs in Republicans-only primaries such as Kansas and California. But he has failed to get his engine really started, and it's doubtful that even a victory in Wisconsin will stop Reagan.

So we are stuck with Carter vs. Reagan. Or are we? There remains one possibility: an independent, third-party candidacy by Anderson. It is an attractive prospect, at least on paper. In terms of personality and policy, Anderson offers a distinctly better choice than those otherwise facing us. He is as determined as Reagan, but no simpleton. He is as moderate as Carter, but not vacillating. Of all the candidates in the 1980 race, Anderson has probably the clearest, most promising domestic agenda. It is based on getting the American economy working again. Anderson wants to balance the federal budget and then institute tax cuts to induce private industry to become more productive. He would encourage savings and investments by allowing individuals to open trust accounts for stocks, bonds, and savings and allow transfers among accounts without taxing profits until the money is withdrawn from the trust. He would eliminate double taxation on the corporate profits of small businesses, and would give small businesses the same tax break homeowners have—permit them to escape capital gains taxes on the sale of one business if it were applied to the purchase of another.

Anderson's 50-cent-a-gallon gasoline tax offers more hope of real conservation than Carter's belated 10-cent proposal, while Reagan virtually dismisses conservation as being un-American. To compensate for some of the inflationary and regressive effects of the tax, Anderson would use the revenues to reduce social security taxes and increase benefits. He also favors a windfall profits tax on oil companies, with the proceeds to be used to finance mass transit, synthetic fuel experiments, and solar research. Anderson's overall energy purpose is to conserve and produce America out of dependence on Middle East oil—and to use our reduced dependency as a means of persuading Europe and Japan to join the US in defending the West's Persian Gulf oil sources.

In foreign policy, Anderson is a mixed bag. He seems to be heavily influenced by Vietnam guilt. He has said that the public act he most deeply regrets was his vote for the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. When President Ford asked for $700 million in 1975 to continue bolstering the Thieu government, Anderson voted "no." But he says he is not a pacifist and denies that he would refuse to commit US forces under any circumstances. He said in an interview that he would fight to defend the Persian Gulf, Yugoslavia, or Western Europe. At the same time, though, he is against US bases in the Middle East, deployment of the neutron warhead in Europe, and draft registration.

Anderson shares Reagan's appreciation for Israel as a US strategic asset, opposes creation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, and would refuse to negotiate with the PLO as long as it refuses to live in peace with Israel. If Carter is reelected, on the other hand, the probability is that US policy would incline toward currying favor with Arab oil producers at the expense of Israel's security.

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drawing by Vint Lawrence

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Anderson's attitude toward the Soviet Union seems to have some of the same uncertainty about it that has befuddled Carter. Anderson says he thinks the Soviets are "mischief-makers, opportunists who fish in troubled waters." They will take advantage of openings presented to them by US irresoluteness. On the other hand, he does not think they are pursuing a master plan for world domination. "I do not have that conspiracy theory that all their tactical moves—into Ethiopia, Angola, and Afghanistan—are part of some grand design. I do not believe they are 10 feet tall. They suffer from paranoia and a lack of self-confidence. They have continued to build up their military forces, but out of a feeling of being inferior, of needing to achieve parity or superiority." Anderson is willing to increase US defense spending by three percent per year, primarily for conventional forces, but he is against deploying the MX land-based missile. He favors putting more US missiles in submarines. He favors SALT II.

I am not convinced that John Anderson is much of a global strategist, but his policies would seem to have more flexibility—to the extent that is a virtue—than Reagan's. His economic and energy policies do seem to parse better than Carter's and Reagan's, and on social issues, he is strictly liberal—pro-ERA, pro-"freedom of choice" on abortion, and pro-gun control.

Can he get himself elected? Well, he would have great problems. First, he would have to break his pledge—delivered repeatedly last week in Illinois—not to run as a third-party candidate. Anderson's great attraction to moderates, liberals, and independents is his image as a painfully honest truth-teller, and that would be destroyed if he suddenly changed his position. He could do so only if a "draft-Anderson" movement developed. For Anderson to encourage such a draft effort would be taken as a breach of promise.

Timing also is a big problem. If Anderson delayed announcement of a third-party effort until after the Republican convention in July, apparently he would be barred from running in 15 states where petition-filing deadlines would have passed. In some other states, including California, the law forbids third-party efforts by candidates who have run for nomination in a major party, although such laws might be challenged in court. If Anderson decided on an independent effort, he probably would have to begin pursuing the option in April, right after the Wisconsin primary.

Some Anderson supporters are convinced that Anderson would be able to raise enough money to mount a national third-party effort, and could attract a sufficient base among disaffected Democrats and Republicans, plus independents, to have a chance of winning. Nearly 35 percent of the US electorate now describes itself as independent, and among voters under 40 years of age—where Anderson's appeal has been strongest—43 percent are independents. But as the Illinois results show, Anderson's support principally rests among young, well-educated, upper-income independents. It is the Eugene McCarthy constituency grown a little older and more property-conscious. It is an elite constituency that would have to be broadened at the expense of Anderson's program and his appeal to his present base. Some Anderson supporters think recruiting a prominent black to be his running mate might help, but it still would be hard for such a ticket to make dents in the black community without Anderson's adopting a considerably more liberal economic program. Trying to appeal to blue-collar whites—say, by picking up a labor leader to run with him—might offend Anderson's suburban-independent base. It also would involve compromising his longstanding positions against such union-backed legislation as common situs picketing and national health care.

Finally, Anderson has against him the whole dismal history of third-party efforts. If Theodore Roosevelt, an ex-president denied nomination through chicanery at his party's convention, could not win the presidency, it is hard to see how an Illinois congressman could galvanize the nation and win. Some commentators think the US electorate is on the verge of a major realignment and is just waiting for an independent hero to sound a clarion. But the real prospects are that John Anderson in 1980 could do no better than Teddy Roosevelt in 1912—only this time, he probably would sap votes away from Carter and clear the way for Reagan.

The outlook is not good. The United States ought to be able to do better, but there seems no alternative to the prospect that in 1981 we will witness the inauguration of President Carter again, or President Reagan. We can only hope that the Republic will survive until 1984.

Morton Kondracke

The three-billion-dollar boondoggle.

Refiner's Heaven

When God created the world, he was not kind to widows, orphans, or small oil refiners. This last group in particular suffers from almost every imaginable handicap. At a time of high prices, most small refineries have unusually high production costs—sometimes several times that of larger ones. At a time of scarce supplies, they tend to waste a lot of oil because of inefficient refining methods. And at a time when gasoline is particularly in demand, they are able to get less gasoline out of each barrel of crude than bigger refineries—and some produce no gasoline at all.

But one need not feel the same sympathy for small

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refiners as for widows and orphans. No one becomes a small refiner except by choice, and the decision can be easily reversed. Moreover, small refiners are not really downtrodden. The usual fallacy is to equate Big Oil with rich people and Small Oil with poor people. The reality is roughly the opposite: it is generally middle-class people who own stock in the major oil companies, and only the rich who invest in small, privately held independent oil firms.

Nonetheless, the federal government has looked after the welfare of small refiners with all the compassion it affords other unfortunates. Over the last two decades there have been several federal programs designed to save small refiners from their predestined economic doom. Together they have done for the American refining industry what the old saying had the six-shooter doing for the Wild West: God made some men big and some men small, but Sam Colt made all men equal.

The effort to help small refiners began in 1959 when the major oil companies pushed for a quota limiting imported oil. At the time, imported oil was considerably cheaper than domestic oil and thus was a competitive threat to US companies with domestic reserves. Energy analysts now refer to the quota as the "Drain America First" policy, since it encouraged overproduction of oil here and underproduction of oil in other parts of the world—such as the Middle East. But to placate small refiners (many of whom depended on foreign sources for their crude), and to fend off any charges that the quota was a gift to Big Oil (which of course it was), Congress and the Eisenhower administration decided to guarantee small refiners a disproportionately large share of the newly limited supply of cheap foreign oil. The small refiners got a break when the quota was established. Later on they managed to get even bigger breaks.

But the days of cheap foreign oil didn't last forever. When OPEC seized control of the world oil market in 1973-74, everything was turned around. No longer did refiners want oil from abroad, since it was no longer cheap. Now they all wanted domestic oil, which was subject to controls that held its prices to less than half that charged by OPEC. Those firms that relied on foreign suppliers were placed at a severe competitive disadvantage to those with access to low-priced domestic oil. So in 1974 the Nixon administration came up with a plan called the entitlements program to eliminate or at least reduce the differences in crude oil costs among different refiners. The idea was to require refiners of domestic oil to pay refiners of imported oil the difference between the cost of domestic and the cost of imported oil. That way, in theory, everyone would have roughly the same costs, thus canceling out any competitive advantage enjoyed by companies with domestic oil. (Unfortunately the program also artificially encouraged imports of oil by subsidizing refiners who used it.)

But it wasn't enough just to make all refiners equal. Some had to be more equal than others—namely the small refiners, whose high costs and inefficient operations made it hard for them to compete with bigger refiners. So the Federal Energy Administration (forerunner of the Department of Energy) created a rule called the "small refiner bias" which channeled the greatest number of "entitlements" to refiners with production capacity of 30,000 barrels per day or less. As of last December, a typical large refiner got an entitlement subsidy of $4.70 for each barrel of imported oil. But the average small refiner got $5.22.

The small refiner bias, however, is not the only special break given small refiners, though it is the most lucrative. The other big one is the "Buy/Sell" program. DOE places the 15 biggest refiners on the Sell list, which requires them to sell some of their oil to any refiner who qualifies for the Buy list. In practice, this means that any small refiner who says that he can't get enough crude oil to keep his operation going has ready access to more. Small refiners also benefit from the Pentagon's policy of buying most of its jet fuel from them and from a special allocation of oil extracted on federal leases.

These assorted subsidies have made the small refining business highly profitable. They have not only ensured the survival of longtime small refiners, but also have lured lots of new investors into the field. The American Petroleum Institute, whose membership includes many small refiners, notes that between 1950 and 1978, 158 new "grass roots" refineries were built in the US. Only four of these had a capacity of more than 50,000 barrels per day. Three-fourths of them were able to handle 10,000 barrels per day or fewer—the least efficient size for a refinery. It is interesting to note that the number of companies with total capacity of 10,000 barrels per day or fewer was declining steadily until the entitlements program was set up in 1974, at which time the trend reversed itself. More than 60 new refineries, all but one of them small, have begun operating in the last six years.

Under ordinary conditions there would be no reason on earth for this sudden surge of investment in small refineries. The economics of the oil industry simply will not support them, except in a few cases where a refinery serves a specialized or isolated market. They are simply too expensive and inefficient. Building a typical simple refinery costs about $2000 per barrel of capacity at the 10,000-barrel level but only half that at the 100,000-barrel level. With more sophisticated equipment, the cost differences are even greater.

(The effect of various subsidies to small refiners is graphically illustrated by the fact that some major oil companies have sold off small refineries to independent companies eager to cash in. After Congress roughly doubled the subsidy to small refiners in 1976, there were six such "spinoffs." Fifteen other small refineries which already had been closed down—presumably because they were too costly to be

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profitable—were bought by new investors and reactivated. Last spring DOE cut the bias subsidy in half, which it says has stopped this trend.)

In all, breaks to small refiners in the entitlements program cost the economy about three billion dollars each year to keep open inefficient refineries that otherwise wouldn't be able to survive on their own. Perhaps more important, it also has aggravated our energy problems. One crucial drawback of small refineries is that most of them produce much less gasoline than larger, more technically sophisticated plants. Some big refineries with the latest technology are able to turn as much as 70 percent of a typical barrel of crude into gasoline, the most valuable product. The average yield for all the nation's refineries is slightly below 50 percent. But a typical small refinery will get only about 30 percent gasoline, and some produce no gasoline at all. The biggest share of each barrel processed by small refineries is middle distillate (diesel fuel and home heating oil) and residual fuel (a heavier substance used to heat and power industrial plants and factories). Sometimes the difference can be critical. During last summer's gasoline shortage, DOE estimated that the small refiner bias was costing the nation 50,000 barrels per day of gasoline. Other estimates ran as high as 400,000 barrels per day, about two-thirds of the estimated total shortage. This waste is certain to get worse. The nation's consumption is shifting more each day to unleaded gasoline, a product which requires even more sophisticated equipment than needed to refine ordinary leaded gasoline. Very few small refiners can produce unleaded gasoline.

All these subsidies look to the unschooled eye like an instance of a powerful interest group using its political leverage at the consumer's expense. But those who defend them say the programs serve broader national interests as well. Basically the rationale is twofold. The first is that subsidies to refineries contribute to national security. In this view, it would be dangerous not to promote domestic refining because foreign refiners could cut us off in wartime or band together to extract OPEC-style profits out of their products. Though this may be an argument for subsidizing domestic refiners, it is not an argument for giving small refiners special help. In fact the nation would get more bang for the buck if large refineries were subsidized instead. In any event, most of the foreign refiners who export to the US are located in the Caribbean and owned by American companies. (Most of these, in fact, were set up purely as a way of circumventing the restrictions in the oil import quota established in 1959.) In wartime, they would be easy to protect.

Nor is it likely that an OPEC-style cartel could be established to raise the price of refined products. The principal reason for OPEC's success is that oil can't be found just anywhere, regardless of the price. But artificially raising the prices of refined products would encourage a sudden proliferation of new refineries all over the world, which in turn would make it impossible for the cartel to limit the supply of these products.

The other argument for special help to small refineries is that they suffer from competitive disadvantages strictly because of their size, mainly in their access to reasonably priced crude oil. But industry experts say the evidence presented by small refiners to prove this charge is misleading. Most small refiners have no choice but to buy oil that is light and low in sulfur, since their equipment can't process heavy, high-sulfur grades. Unfortunately for them, this light, "sweet" crude is also the most popular and thus the most expensive type of oil. "What they're complaining about is that they have to pay more than they'd like," says one refining expert.

The good news here is that the small refiner bias (though not the other special breaks) is due to expire in October 1981, when price controls for domestic oil are scheduled to be removed. The bad news is that now there are moves afoot on Capitol Hill to channel new assistance to small refiners to make up for the loss. Senator Bennett Johnston, a Louisiana Democrat whose district has several small refineries, already has introduced a bill to protect small refineries from the hazards of normal competition. Johnston's bill continues the current Buy/Sell program, which forces efficient refiners to share their crude supplies with inefficient refiners, authorizes loan guarantees for new investment, and imposes a tariff on all imports of refined products. Under fire from critics, Johnston now is revising the bill, and its final outlines are anybody's guess. His aides say there's not much chance the Senate will take any action this year. Presumably the real pressure for helping small refiners will come in 1981, with the phase-out of price controls and the entitlements program. If history is any indication, Congress will do something to bail out small refiners. And if history is any indication, the nation will suffer as a result.

Stephen Chapman

The Iranian captivity.

Revolution-Watching

Watching the ayatollah, the other ayatollahs, the militants, the demonstrating crowds, the revolutionary council, the foreign minister, the new president . . . one learns the importance of having a government. Even if the best government is one that governs least, it must at least govern. Thus far, the Iranian revolution has been a people's festival, a school holiday, a vacation from authority. Perhaps we should sympathize with

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that, for it may well be that the government the Iranians eventually get, like the one they had, will be worse than the present turmoil. And yet the purpose of a revolution is to produce a new regime, a new social order, new economic arrangements. This is not the work of men and women marching endlessly through the streets with their fists raised. The marchers, like the militants in the embassy, prolong the holiday and the turmoil, but are unable to create anything new.

From the beginning of the hostage crisis, the Carter administration, unwilling to use force or uncertain that force could be used effectively, decided on a policy of appeasement. But there was this fatal ambiguity in the policy: our leaders were unsure just whom to appease. Fortunately for us all, I think, the militants have turned out to be unappeasable. They insist on total surrender, and even the United Nations—which has assumed what we may come to recognize as its characteristic role, the intermediary of appeasement—was not prepared for that. The departure of the Waldheim Commission from Tehran was the most forceful act by UN personnel within recent memory. But had the militants been smarter (less militant?), they might have asked for a lot and gotten it, first from the UN and then from the US, then claimed a great triumph and a vindication for the politics of international terrorism.

We don't really know who the militants are. When they imprisoned their captives, they imprisoned themselves too, cut themselves off from the ongoing politics of the revolution, locked themselves into what must be a hothouse of ideological or religious fervor. I don't relish the thought of the hostages locked up with them. And yet I can't help thinking that our government has been lucky in its enemies. Just as the PLO persistently refuses American overtures, and so holds off the crisis in American policy that acceptance would bring, so the Iranian militants have spared us humiliation and denied themselves the possibility of victory. Why? Why haven't they emerged from their self-imposed prison to join the politics outside, to articulate a program, to build a movement? Why didn't they negotiate with the UN? Full of hate and anger and, it may now be, full of fear, they await their inevitable defeat.

That defeat should have been our goal from the start. We should have aimed, we should still aim, at forcing a confrontation between the militants and some emerging revolutionary government. Whatever the political character of that government, it will act, as soon as it can effectively, on our behalf. It will dispossess the militants and free the hostages—if only to prove that it really is a *government*. And for that outcome, we can and we ought to wait. We should try, of course, to build up diplomatic and economic pressure on Iran. But mostly we have no choice but to sit still, refusing every arrangement that even appears to give way to the militants. We owe much to the hostages, but we don't owe them a deal that, for the sake of their release, legitimates their capture and puts Americans all over the world—diplomats, businessmen, students, and tourists—at risk.

Bani-Sadr is by far the most attractive figure to emerge in the course of the revolution. Despite his disconcerting resemblance to Inspector Clouseau, he is no comic figure. He has courage, speaks with unusual frankness, and seems committed to a serious program of social experimentation and change. Behind the obligatory rhetoric, he is recognizably center-left, perhaps center-new left, an opponent of the militants and of the clerical fundamentalists. He embodies the hopes of Iranian democracy. Unhappily, the army isn't his, nor the police, nor the revolutionary guard. He has no armed supporters; he doesn't lead a vanguard movement. He has no base except a popular base and no mandate except an electoral mandate—an anomaly among revolutionary leaders. And so he is precariously perched.

He is unlikely to win out in the parliamentary elections, where the mullahs, organized down to the village level, can easily influence or intimidate the voters. The procedures of the voting completed last week are worth noting. In a country which still has a high illiteracy rate, it was decided that each voter would have to copy from a list of several hundred names the 30 that he wanted to support. Conveniently, scribes were available to write out the list for those voters unable to do so themselves. Under these conditions, it is hard to imagine any outcome other than a victory for the clerical coalition. And that probably means a long wait for the American hostages.

Bani-Sadr's strategy for releasing the hostages was to build up the Waldheim Commission. "An investigation directed against a superpower," he told *Le Monde* after the investigation had been hastily adjourned, "is a turning point in the history of humanity, the debut of a new era for all the oppressed of the planet. Unfortunately, the Islamic students are not able to understand that." The argument would sound better than it does if we had some reason to expect other investigations of other superpowers: Russia in Afghanistan, China in Tibet, France in Central Africa. But there is no reason to expect anything like that. The Nuremberg trials were morally important (even though they were never repeated) because nazism was something so extraordinary and so frightening that it needed to be singled out and definitively repudiated. But American conduct in Iran was the ordinary conduct of a superpower. The only reason for *this* investigation is the seizure of the hostages: and that makes a bad precedent.

Of course, the American government participated in the shah's tyranny (as we have and continue to participate in tyrannies in other parts of the world). Many liberals and leftists opposed our Iranian policy and can now plausibly argue the political stupidity of trying to "hold" a country by shipping vast quantities of military hardware to its tyrants. But it is silly to claim

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that the US was the cause of tyrannical government in Iran—as silly as it is to claim that everything that goes wrong in the country today proves the existence of an American conspiracy. As if Americans were omnipotent and Iranians childlike and irresponsible! In fact, Iran had tyrants before the shah, centuries of rule by brutal military chiefs, extending back long before the history of the United States began. We can't be to blame for all that. If Iran's revolutionaries are to give their people something new, they must look to the transformation of their own political culture. Anti-Americanism is a diversion from their real work.

Were we to acknowledge our complicity, we might have some difficulty repeating it. But the next Iranian government, or the one after that, almost certainly will seek (and probably get) American help in repressing various provincial rebellions. So long as the government calls itself revolutionary, most of the shah's opponents will applaud the repression. And no UN commission will listen to the testimony of the victims. Maybe, then, the Kurds would be wise to take some American hostages . . . just as a precaution.

Somewhere around the 120th day of the hostages' captivity, a camel was sacrificed in front of the embassy. American newspapers reported the sacrifice as if it were the sort of thing that political militants did all the time. They expressed no surprise and reported no details. (How do you sacrifice a camel? Did the militants burn the entrails and distribute the meat among the ayatollahs?) In fact, political militants don't do that sort of thing all the time. I've never read of a camel being sacrificed in the midst of a revolution, not even in Paris in 1789. There are still things going on in Iran that we are not likely to understand.

Michael Walzer

On changing horses in midstream.

Smoke-Filled Rooms?

When he was younger, my son used to try to change the rules of games we played when it appeared he wasn't going to win. Like a number of leading journalists, who already are advocating repealing the primary election reforms because they don't like the choices the new system is producing, he didn't like to lose. My son is maturing now, and is willing to give the rules a chance when they have some internal logic and philosophical soundness. James Reston, Anthony Lewis, David Broder, and *The New Republic*'s editorial writers should, too.

Do those who advocate reforming the reforms remember how they came to be? Do they remember the then-governor of Pennsylvania, David Lawrence, "swinging his delegation" like so many marionettes to John F. Kennedy before a national television audience in 1960? Or the unsuccessful efforts of black southern delegations to get seated at the Democratic National Convention in 1964? Can they have forgotten Chicago in 1968 with Mayor Richard Daley and the bloody remains of the McCarthy-Kennedy anti-war campaigns? After that debacle, either we were going to continue to recognize the right of party war horses to control the nominating processes or we had to open up the system to plain old volunteers and interested citizens. Because we believed in democracy, had confidence in the intelligence of the electorate, and trusted the good intentions, if not the competence, of the mass media to bring us the necessary information, we rejected a closed, boss-dominated nominating process. Now we are witnessing the inevitable growing pains of that revolution.

What galls the anti-reform pundits is the likelihood of a contest in November between Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. Now neither of these men happens to be my favorite either, but it is hard to argue that the process that will produce their nominations is unresponsive to the electorate. Some critics have suggested that the system will have failed if the nominations are foregone conclusions before the first of April. After Illinois, it looks increasingly as if that may be the case. But if the contests are all but over then, it may be simply because the challenges were not sufficiently broad to capitalize on the early primaries and caucuses.

On the Democratic side, Jimmy Carter is a sitting president, and challenging an incumbent chief executive in an intra-party fight is never easy even in the best of circumstances. It is even tougher this time around because it is not the president's integrity that is in question, as it was in 1968, but the challenger's. And rather than being split apart by a controversial war, the country in 1980 has tended to pull together in support of the government's efforts to free the hostages in Iran and respond to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

On the Republican side, events are running equally true to form. Ronald Reagan has been the favorite in this race ever since he nearly took the nomination away from Gerald Ford in 1976. Had Ford not been the incumbent, Reagan would have won the nomination on the first ballot by an overwhelming margin. Like it or not, Reagan is the favorite of the party faithful, and if someone like John Anderson were to stop him, it would be a case of grand larceny. This nomination has been Reagan's for the asking for the last four years. He forgot to ask for it in Iowa and got slapped on the wrist, but he learned his lesson there; nothing short of evidence of his physical incapacity for office will stop him, or should stop him, from coming away with the brass ring in Detroit in July.

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Reagan's stumble in Iowa, in fact, is evidence of a responsive, open, and democratic process. Reagan, unlike Carter, had no principled reason for staying away from the Iowa debate, and the voters reacted accordingly. Had Reagan failed to change his strategy and recognize that his popularity could not insulate him from the test of confrontation with his challengers, he might have blown the whole thing, not just Iowa. But he had the sense to campaign hard in New Hampshire, and it paid off.

George Bush's behavior in New Hampshire also cost him dearly, but it was not an arbitrary or unfair price. Polls showed that voters with very different points of view saw something in Bush with which to identify. But they did not know him well, and at the Nashua debate he displayed a streak of arrogance and petulance which tended to confirm the worst for those who had run into the Andover-Yalie type before. It was not a pleasant moment, but the voters of New Hampshire and of the nation appear to have thought it was a revealing one, and they might be right.

Apart from defending the primary reforms because they are producing the candidates who best reflect the majority perspective in each of the political parties, there are two other interrelated factors campaign reforms have brought about which are central to any effective democratic process. The first is turnout. More people voted in the Massachusetts, Iowa, New Hampshire, and Illinois primaries than ever before. We now are seeing a reversal of the 20-year downward spiral in voter turnout in this country. It is disingenuous to dismiss this by suggesting that all those people are just voting and not signing up to volunteer for the candidates of their choice. One step at a time. The system never was designed to generate 10 hours of volunteer political service from every citizen before it could be judged successful. The second factor is sophisticated, informed voters. The polls have shown over and over again this political season that voters leaving the polls have a pretty good idea of how the candidates stand on the issues that have been raised in the campaign. They know which candidate wants to control your wages, which one your gun, and which one your right to an abortion.

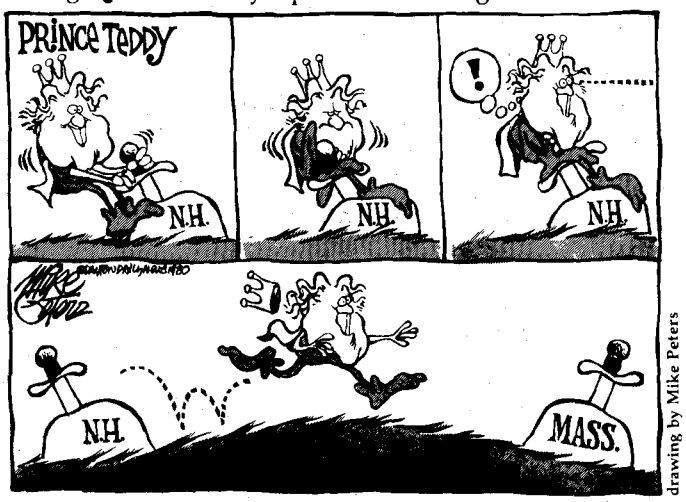
Yet none of these arguments seem to budge those who would like to see a return to some version of the old smoke-filled rooms.

Critics of reform carp that the proliferation of primaries has given an unfair advantage to unemployed candidates. This certainly helped Carter in 1976, but not Reagan. It helped Reagan in 1980, but not Connolly. Baker blew his advantage over Bush not because he was employed, but because he thought his Senate visibility was a substitute for letting the voters get to know him better. It wasn't and it shouldn't be.

We also hear that provisions should be made for political leaders, such as governors or state party chairpersons, to go to the conventions somewhat automatically because they provide the ballast and seasoning necessary for thoughtful decision-making. But that suggestion, to which I have no strong objection, misses the point. Under the new system the die is cast by the time the delebates convene precisely because they are bound to reflect the views of the people in the party who sent them there. There has not been a second ballot at a national convention since 1952. What difference unaffiliated party leaders would have made escapes me. Moreover, if it should happen, as it may still on the Republican side this year, that the front-runner will come to the convention with less than the required first ballot majority, the negotiating will be just where it ought to be: in the hands of the candidates themselves—who will command the loyalty of their own delegates.

We are further cautioned that the reforms produce candidates who are superficial, inexperienced image-hounds. To the degree that this is true, it is nothing new. Such charges have been flying around since television began to produce political coverage. In 1960, before the reforms, the Democrats nominated the candidate who was newest, most "telegenic," and most "glib." The current reality is that anyone who seriously seeks national leadership in the United States must be able to communicate on television. You can't be president without it. It's a relatively new qualification for the White House, but not one to disparage. Certainly the talent for communicating well in print, for being able to conduct long, thoughtful conversations with leading columnists, and for winning the support of party bosses like Jane Byrne do not make a person inherently better suited for being president than the capacity to project one's ideas on television. Television is here to stay, and no amount of hand-wringing by print journalists will make it go away.

There are, however, three areas where reforms have caused unanticipated stresses and side-effects, and where some new calculations would help streamline the primary process. The most obvious is television. The networks are relatively new at this business and they have made some mistakes. They spent a fortune covering Iowa; they were thus obliged to make something profound out of what happened there, even though little really qualified. George Bush took



drawing by Mike Peters

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advantage of a long period of organization and an unexpected Reagan blunder to emerge from the pack. Journalists who had been in Iowa knew that Bush was going to do well. Carter's Iowa victory was equally predictable. The networks certainly over-covered Iowa, and should generally be more selective in their coverage of isolated primaries. There should be more pressure exerted by both interested political groups and the networks themselves for live televised debates. Though there still is too much of the horserace about television campaign coverage, there also is evidence that the network moguls are getting the message. NBC, for example, hired Ken Bode (late of this journal) to beef up their election coverage. His reports, most of them of the behind-the-scenes variety, have added immeasurably to viewers' understanding of the candidates and their campaigns.

Crossover voting, especially on the Republican side, is the work of the devil; it feeds all the other social and technological pressures that are undercutting political parties. The least we can do for the parties is to limit participation in the nominating processes to voters who are willing to call themselves either Republicans or Democrats, even if for a very short period of time. This wouldn't do my own brand of politics much good (I like most of what John Anderson has to say), but I don't think a system that allows an Anderson to pile up Republican delegates with Democratic votes makes much sense.

Money still is the biggest problem. Admittedly, the reforms created a new monster, the special interest political action committee (PAC), which can exert heavy leverage on hard-pressed candidates trying to put together a serious presidential campaign. It is disturbing to see Representative David Obey, Democrat of Wisconsin, quoted as saying that the National Education Association made it clear that there would be no campaign funds forthcoming for those who voted against the establishment of a separate Department of Education. And there were uncomfortable moments when John Anderson signed a fund-raising letter for a pro-choice organization shortly after the organization had made a substantial donation to his campaign.

Radical surgery could cut into the costs of running for president, although federal matching funds already have begun to do so. Shortening the primary season and grouping more primaries regionally would help. So would an FCC ban on paid advertising on television and radio, and a requirement that free time be offered to the candidates, preferably to appear together. A publicly subsidized mailing of all candidates' literature might further reduce the cost of campaigning.

Those political insiders who find themselves faced with the unpalatable likelihood of two non-Washington nominees, and with upstart television playing a more commanding role than ever before, have been too quick to sentimentalize the past and reject the experiment in which we now are engaged. There have been many times before when we did not like the choice that the old, and very different, nominating process offered up to us. How many times in the last 20 years have we complained about the choice that the nominating process yielded? Let's at least wait until the process runs its course before we throw it out. And then let's concentrate on tinkering with some of the unintended results without cutting away the heart of the reforms.

Martin Linsky

Martin Linsky is a media consultant for the Institute of Politics at Harvard and the Ford Foundation.

How to get good help.

Capitalism and Housework

by Anne Colamosca

If Milton Friedman were a 30-ish female academic struggling to get tenure, raise a kid, and run a household, he might begin to understand that the free market does not automatically rise to the occasion. Sometimes it needs a little help in bringing together the demand side—those who desperately need help in managing a household—with the supply side—those who want household jobs but lack the connections or wherewithal to get them.

The thought of a harried Professor Friedman rocking

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a slobbering baby on one knee, mixing the ingredients for a Scarsdale poached fish natalia for the evening guests, and worrying over an afternoon lecture on the Federal Reserve system is comforting, but unfortunately he does not have to cope with free-market malfunctions on such a personal level. But a genuine problem exists and is growing. The hot social issues of civil rights, women's liberation, and alien workers have come to a head not in pleadings before the Supreme Court or in congressional committees, but in relations between the white middle-class woman and her Haitian housekeeper over cleaning up that perpetually grimy bathtub ring. The most clear-headed, and ultimately the most compassionate way to think about the problem is in straightforward economic terms.

For many years it has not been considered polite or sensitive behavior in liberal circles to go through the "I can't do a thing with my maid" routine. Some who would like to employ a housekeeper, and could afford to do so, refrain out of belief that people should clean up their own dirt. Others who do employ domestic servants feel vaguely guilty about it. As a result, they put up with inept or lax workmanship, and certainly do not advertise their shame to friends.

But the return of middle-class women to the job market means that more and more families need and can afford help in keeping the house. And there still are plenty of poorer people, also mostly women, who are eager for work. Cleaning up for yourself, or indulging in psychological evasions of the fact that you are an employer with an employee, is no favor to these other women. "That liberal guilt is going to end up by ruining our organizing efforts," says Carolyn Reed, the most powerful figure in the Household Technicians of America, which now boasts 10,000 members across the country. Already a combination of liberal guilt and a tough economy have reduced the number of household jobs in the New York City area by one-quarter over the past few years. "We want to professionalize household work, get good money for it, and not pretend that it isn't an important job that has to be done," Reed says. What Carolyn Reed hates most of all are patronizing terms such as "girl," "just one of the family," "domestic," and "help." HTA endorses the use of a standardized contract, already common in Manhattan, that calls for a trial employment period, paid vacations, and other benefits. Reed's view is that such a contract is good for both sides, because it forces both employees and employers to say straight out what they expect from each other. In effect, such formalities bring household work out of feudalism and into the capitalist era, where relations are based on contract and not on status. The HTA plan is a good one, but it is best suited to the experienced, already employed, older household technicians, as they call themselves. Many middle-class employers with the need and money to hire housekeepers say they can't find any, or—if they are pressed—not the kind that suits them. On the other hand, household job-hunters trudge all day to job interviews and talk in morbid tones about all the times they've been rejected. No rational middle-man mechanism has grown up to bridge the gap. Instead, what private enterprise has produced are hundreds of household employment agencies that charge high prices, give no training to prospective workers, and are pleased when workers are fired because fast turnover helps profits.

The traditional source of household help—the black American female—is drying up. Younger black women, with better educations and greater opportunities than their mothers, increasingly are able to get blue- or white-collar jobs with better salaries. The labor gap has been filled by immigrant women—also black in many cases, and usually Latin American. Some are illegal aliens; others are here legally. More than just foreign and unable to speak English, such a woman often is making the sudden switch from a pre-industrial agrarian village in Nicaragua to a 20th-century nightmare like New York City. Her only guide usually is a cynical agency entrepreneur who has 20 other workers to take her place if she fails, which she often does. Once she gets past the trauma of a job interview and is lucky enough to land a job, she is expected to take over confidently. This includes working all the electronic gadgets around the house without breaking them, taking care of the Persian rug (even though she's never seen one before), babying the French country furniture, and handling a small child who spends most of his time playing with alarming electronic games that beep all the time.

A woman from El Salvador, recently picked up by the Immigration Department on one of its early morning sweeps through the New York Port Authority bus terminal (gateway to the New Jersey suburbs), described her relationship with an employer through a friend who speaks English. She works three eight-hour days in three different households. At three dollars an hour, she makes $72 a week. "One lady is really down on me. She is always giving me dirty looks. She tells me . . . why didn't I read the directions when I waxed the kitchen floor so it wouldn't turn yellow? I would not tell

Coming:

Morton Kondracke on Reagan's Foreign Policy.

•

Xan Smiley on Post-Election Zimbabwe.

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her I can't read. And then she turns around with a smile and says, did I go to see the play *Evita*? It's about Spanish people. I say to myself, What a stupid bitch. How could I afford that?"

On the other hand, though, a young psychotherapist in her 30s voices the frustration of many professional mothers who desperately need experienced housekeepers and child-care workers to help them meet an exhausting schedule of work and parenting. "The last housekeeper I had was frightened to death of everything. She had come from a tiny town in Haiti where I found out later there was no running water at all. To watch her wash three dishes at the sink was petrifying. She would run out of the room when the dishwasher went on, and would not dream of lighting the oven. In hiring someone for this job, I've had a hard time getting a feel for the people. Many claim they don't speak English, and they often seem hostile. I have gotten a lot of funny feelings about myself during the process, wondering why I don't seem to be able to reach them . . . especially since I do it for a living. But I am continually worried that something will happen to my baby because of ignorance."

A white dancer who had worked with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in New York describes her feelings about hiring a child-care worker: "I had been the one back in the 1960s in Mississippi who always stood up for the civil rights movement. And I never felt any problem about working with a black dance company. But the Caribbean woman I hired acted in a very hostile way to both my husband and me, and she continually made racist comments to the baby. Also, having lived in Brazil for a while myself, I knew something about voodoo, and I had strong suspicions about some of her behavior. I began to wonder if she practiced voodoo. . . . I would see brown spots on our wash and I had a hunch it had a connection to a voodoo rite I had known about in Brazil. I finally fired her . . . but I felt guilty because she had never really done anything bad to the baby."

Nothing is happening in the current system to make things better. "The private agencies are not the people to change things for the better," Carolyn Reed says. "A few years back, I applied for work doing child-care, but emphasized that I had no experience at it. On the telephone I heard the agency manager describing my vast experience with children. Because of their lying, agencies contribute to the problem of mistrust between employers and employees. The New York State Employment Service is no better. They do not even help technicians learn how to conduct a simple interview."

What could help, although it seems almost anachronistic to suggest it these days, would be a simple federal program to give some short-term training and a temporary home base to these new, often confused potential workers. Rather than hassling and detaining aliens who want green cards to work, why not give them green cards and help them get lined up and trained to do decent-paying, necessary jobs? In the past this country has recognized labor shortages in different areas and made it easy for that sort of laborer to become US citizens and get work. One has only to spend a few hours interviewing exhausted parents trying to juggle jobs, babysitting, cooking, and cleaning to know that if they could find dependable technicians and child-care workers, they would gladly lay out the money.

Such a program would not be expensive. A three- or four-week orientation program would be enough to help new workers get acclimated before they went out into the job market. The government program could use the experience of groups like the Household Technicians of America. The HTA could send some of its best hotshot housekeepers to give informal talks about caring for a house, and in apprentice style take trainees to their jobs once or twice. English courses could be part of the training. Continuing guidance and some kind of grievance mechanism open to employers and employees also would be useful.

We must recognize that we have a nationwide shortage of trained professional workers to run households and help care for children. The conservative argument against setting up federal child-care centers across the country has been that children are better off in a home environment in their early years. If that is the case, then why can't some money be set aside to educate an independent specialized labor force that would help make that possible? Reed says she would be in favor of some kind of government-sponsored program to help train new household technicians and child-care workers. "It is not just a dirty little job," she insists, "that someone does because they can't do anything else. Knowing how to manage a house, talk to an electrician, care for a child, is complicated stuff if it is done well."

Reed plans to push for high school household management courses so that young people—white and black, male and female—can learn some skills that could help them make a good living in this field or at least to do it for themselves. Another dream of hers is to set people up working in teams—moving through apartment complexes together, cleaning, cooking, and caring for children as a group, so that more people could afford it. One can only hope that Carolyn Reed has a lot of success with her plans. She's the only one around right now seriously trying to do something to overhaul the American household labor scene, professionalize it, and straighten out the mess of bad feelings that exists. Her energies now are devoted mainly to those experienced older black workers who are her major constituency. Meanwhile, the special problems of the new foreign workers continue to remain their own. And short-handed dual-job families, often with small children, spend grueling hours trying to get everything done alone. Surely the capitalist system ought to be able to bring labor problems to a mutual solution with just a little bit of help.

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The press has raised more questions than answers.

ABSCAM's Loose Cannons

by Nick Kotz

In the post-Watergate atmosphere of intensified press attention to every glimmer of alleged wrongdoing by public officials, it is not surprising that none of the news organizations that broke the ABSCAM story paused very long to consider protecting the rights of people not even formally accused of any crimes. "NBC News has learned," crowed anchorwoman Jane Pauley, "of an extraordinary story of political corruption involving 20 public officials, all of whom accepted bribes from FBI personnel posing as influence buyers. One senator is involved, six congressmen." Charges, of course, had not been filed against anyone, nor even evidence presented to a grand jury. But by any standards, this was a sensational story. It was going to break, as FBI agents fanned out around the country to question suspects, and news editors and reporters worried mostly about not getting beaten by the competition. There is merit, then, to the complaint that the initial stories were less the result of the press digging out corruption than of the press being used by government officials for their own yet unknown motives.

But a reading of subsequent ABSCAM stories by Anthony Marro of *Newsday*, Leslie Maitland of the *New York Times*, Charles Babcock of the *Washington Post*, NBC correspondent Brian Ross, and a slew of other reporters raises serious questions about the government's conduct of the entire operation. From their reporting, a picture emerges of an out-of-control law enforcement operation in which seedy characters were empowered to roam the corridors of officialdom as unrestrained agents provocateurs, and in which the government had to ignore—even cover up—extracurricular crimes by its informers to protect its main Arab scam.

In the often justifiably paranoid circles of Washington power, especially on Capitol Hill, questions now center on the motives of assumed government leakers. Were they out to ruin the Democrats? Were the press leaks carefully orchestrated from the top? Were the leakers determined to stop someone in higher authority from suppressing their investigation? Or were the leakers intent on killing off the operation with premature disclosures before it reached other targets?

A current Justice Department investigation into the leaks probably will prove inconclusive, but the stories themselves provide illuminating insights into the egos and mindsets of the probable leakers: the Justice Department lawyers and FBI agents who ran the operation in the field, and their principal informers. The story seems to be one of blatant self-promotion by officials, squabbling over the case between rival prosecutors, braggadocio by freewheeling informants. Into this mix add a few highly competitive, talented investigative reporters with wide-ranging contacts and the result eventually is a story—and then lots more of them, as all the principal actors and bit players, including potential defendants and their defense attorneys, scramble for advantage.

In the original *New York Times* story, unnamed law enforcement officials proclaimed ABSCAM the most sweeping investigation into political corruption by the FBI in at least 25 years. The day after the operation was shut down, similarly anonymous investigators complained in the press that other congressmen might have been implicated if the investigation had been allowed to continue. "If we hadn't stopped," said one in *Newsday*, "we might have gotten a substantial percentage of the United States Congress."

In the second-day stories, government officials claimed in leaked reports to all the principal newspapers that the case was widening and evidence was firming up against four congressmen, as a Philadelphia middleman lawyer had agreed to cooperate with the government. And *Times* readers were told, in the same story, that a US attorney in New Jersey had tried to shut down the ABSCAM case against Senator Williams.

Whoever did the leaking, suffice it to say, most of these early disclosures and stories seemed to boost the interests of the field managers of the ABSCAM operation, including Assistant Director Neil J. Welch, head of the FBI's New York Division, and Thomas P. Puccio, head of the Justice Department's Organized Strike Force for the Eastern District of New York. When a weekly paper in New York City surmised that Welch and/or Puccio were probable leakers of the *Times*'s original detailed story, a columnist for another weekly counterattacked against this wretched betrayal of investigative reporters and their news sources. Then, in a separate story for the *Washington Post*, the indignant columnist interviewed Puccio, who portrayed himself as trying to stop the leaked accounts from being published.

If these rival intrigues weren't enough to produce ample informants for the press, then disclosure was seemingly assured by the unbashful emergence from under cover of the key government witness in the

(continued on page 24)

Nick Kotz has won a Pulitzer Prize for his investigative reporting.

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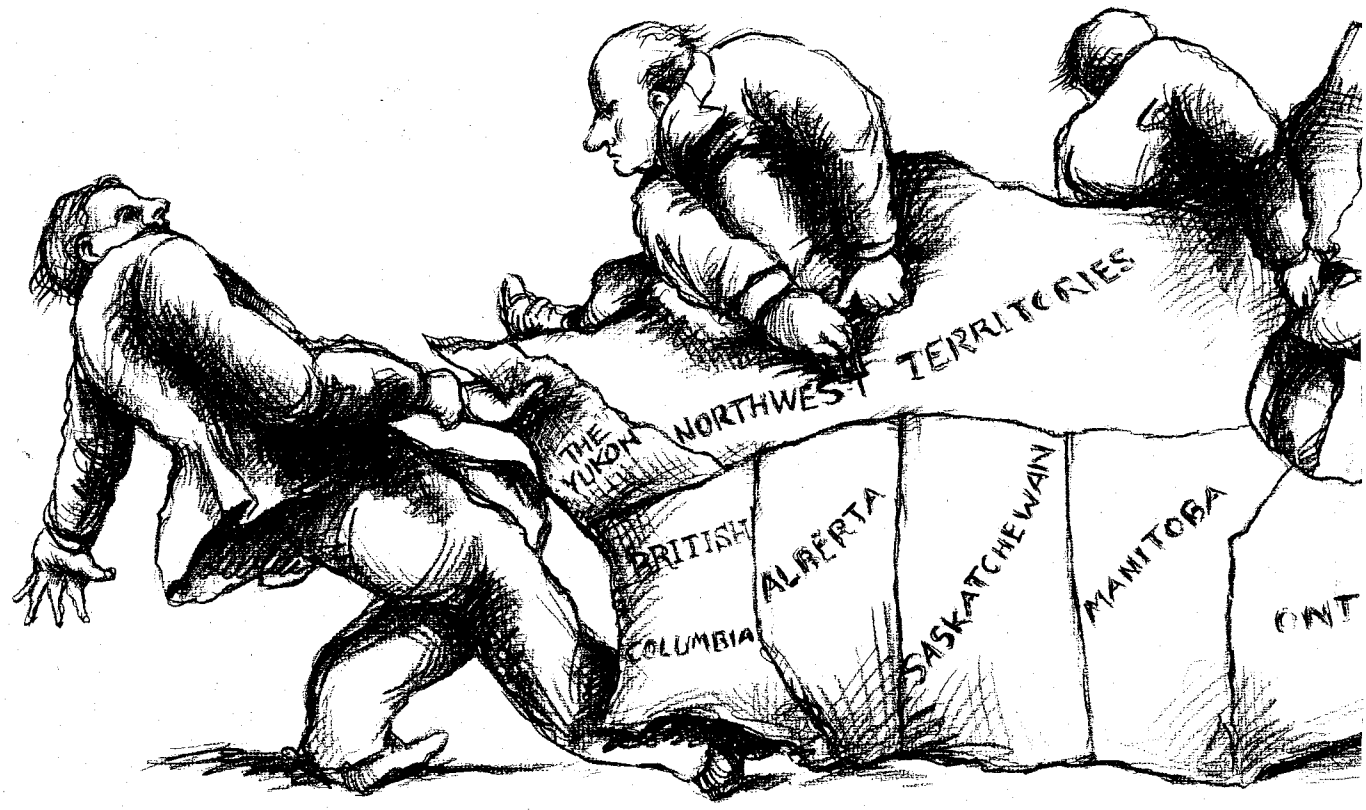

What is really happening to

"For the security of North America in the rest of this century, it may be that nothing is more important than the unity of Canada."
—James Reston, the New York *Times*

It is a cause of genuine wonder abroad that, even in the brief afterglow of the Tehran "embassy caper" and the return to office of Prime Minister Trudeau, Canadians should appear to have lost their bearings. *Canadians,* of all people—so blessed with natural treasure and political freedom.

But a rush of change has placed Canada and its federal system under serious strain. The danger is that, as Canadians pursue their *local* interests and identities, they find themselves on a collision course with others.

John Hirsch came to Canada from Hungary in 1974. "In Quebec now," Hirsch has said, "I am regarded as an Anglo-Saxon. In Toronto, I'm looked upon as a westerner in spite of my Hungarian accent—I am expected to ride on the back of a buffalo. When I go to Edmonton, I am called an easterner. I don't know where the hell I fit in as a Canadian." Hirsch concluded that there are "two ways to cope with it as a human being—to run away, or to stretch one's self."

To stretch one's self...that is the challenge for Canadians now.

What does Quebec want?

This question has resounded through Canadian life for two exasperating decades, until the English became as sick of asking it as the French were of answering it. In 1976, French-speaking Quebec elected a premier who for the first time seemed willing to answer that question. To answer it, for that matter, in a one-syllable word.

What does Quebec want? Quebec, declared Premier René Lévesque, wants "out"—of Canada. But what many urban and rural Quebecers share, and have shared for several centuries, is not a desire to get "out" of Canada, but an enduring *ambivalence* about it. They have considered themselves good Quebecers and good Canadians, and have rejected the advice of anyone who tells them they cannot be both.

No aspect of the survival of more than five million French-speaking Quebecers as a distinct society in North America has been more clouded by misunderstanding than the question of language. Outside Quebec, many English-speaking Canadians seldom hear a language spoken other than their own. They ask, even at this late date, why anyone living in North America would insist on speaking anything but English—and why is the Quebecer's language so important anyway?

It certainly was true that immigrants arriving in English-speaking Canada could find their situations mirrored in American novelist James Baldwin's remark about class-conscious Britain: "To open your mouth in England is to have confessed your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem and—your future." Baldwin's remark applies—alas—to what it has meant to speak French in Canada through most of Canadian history.

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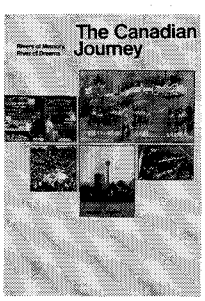
our good friends in Canada?

Then came the revolution: the not-so-Quiet Revolution that shook Quebec to its foundations in the 1960's, and is still shaking up old power relationships and old ways of doing things in Quebec and in Canada as a whole.

All of this is a breathtaking change from the Quebec of just two decades ago, when frustrated students used to chant: *"La belle province* how charming; come and see the peasants starving."

But other ethnic groups also feel ignored. Their spokesmen have protested fiercely against "special privileges" for French-Canadians. In truth, there has never been a "typical" experience shared by all immigrants to Canada.



Canadians have been hearing talk of renewing the country on sounder foundations for almost as long as they can remember. Now the issues go far beyond Quebec. One serious complaint is that national policies of a century ago do not reckon with a more mature western region. Today's western Canada is no one's hinterland any longer. It is the home of nearly one Canadian out of three, and flourishing with creativity in business, government and the arts.

What are the noblest words in the literature of democracy?

They may well be the three simple words that begin the U.S. Constitution —"We, the People." But how long has it been since the people of Canada spoke those words together? These days, Canadians too often psyche themselves into a state of mind where, instead of "We, the People," there is only a "we" and a "they."

We English-Canadians speak "the language of business, the language of North America"; *they* do not. *We* French-Canadians have our own profoundly original culture and identity, as well as our special privileges as a "founding race"; *they* do not. *We* in central Canada own "our" industries, and *we* in the western provinces own "our" resources—and *they* better not get in our way.

Living in a pluralistic federal Canada has its difficulties. Canadians can of course choose to live apart, particularly the English and French language groups—each large and powerful enough to break up the country.

There is a more promising choice. A country's political framework and values are not something to be knocked down this Monday and built anew by next Friday. They are more like a garden, to be nurtured in harmony with the landscape. The Canadian landscape began to shift two decades ago, and the season has come to change.

It should begin with recognition that the existence of two great language communities and many regional and cultural differences—which we often insist are problems that cripple Canadians—are in fact opportunities that can enrich and free us. For "they," in the end, is all of us.

From a special report on Canada being published as a public service by The Seagram Company Ltd. This full-color, 36-page report is appearing in English and French in more than one million copies of Canadian magazines. Reprints in either language are available in the United States at no charge by writing to Report, Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, Inc., 375 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

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Beyond J. Edgar

In the ABSCAM project, the FBI, operating under a new director of no reputation, has come out of the closet. It has begun to serve "the law," which gives the Bureau authority and responsibility not only to detect crime, to pursue and capture criminals, but also to *prevent* crime. This latter purpose is at once the basic justification for ABSCAM and the bureaucratic dynamic that generated it.

The critical point is not whether or not the ABSCAM actions legally involved "entrapment," but that a government agency charged with crime control set up conditions that would move persons to perform illegal acts, following which they would be prosecuted. In defense of its activities, the FBI has said that the persons who were offered "bribes" were not "targeted," i.e. picked as victims by the Bureau, nor were they selected at random. They had been named by an informer who, seeking to reduce his sentence in a stolen property case, named politicians who either had taken bribes or who might be tempted. Evidently the FBI, claiming that "scam" operations involving truck hijackings and fencing of stolen goods have discouraged these illegal activities, believes that through operations such as ABSCAM political corruption and white-collar crime also will be discouraged.

The possibilities are almost without limit. Anyone subject to temptation would be fair game. The FBI could infiltrate the H. R. Block Company, for example, and offer unsuspecting clients clever ways of avoiding payment of income taxes. The 10 most wanted persons could be determined in advance, moved to perform criminal action, and arrested immediately. There would then be no waiting list, nor embarrassment as the number wanted, but not caught, continued to grow.

It is in the business of purifying politics that the new technique has the greatest potential, though. That process is already well under way and has progressed at least partially through two stages. First was the effort to protect candidates from the electorate by limiting campaign contributions and requiring the disclosure of the names of contributors. In the ultimate purification, the government will finance all campaigns itself. That would leave only one serious question: who or what agency will decide which candidate and which party will get the government money?

The second stage of purification is protecting the officeholder from his constituency through such devices as open committee meetings, regulation of lobbyists, limitations on "earned income," public reports of wealth, health, and medical records, etc.

If corruption persists after all of these methods of control are perfected, and there is good reason to believe that it will, the next step obviously would be to insure that potential officeholders were of such character as to be above and beyond corruption. A state run by the pure, the good, the incorruptible is an idea as old as Plato. The "guardians" of the state should be, he said, selected and given special training. They should be "watched from their youth upwards," tested by "toils and pains." They should be tried with "pleasures" also. Those who come "out of the trial victorious and pure" should be, according to Plato, appointed as guardians of the state.

In this process of selection, the FBI could play a crucial role. Beyond investigations of announced candidates, it could run scam tests of their integrity and publish results before the election date, or it could leak such results. Candidates could be graded as to the level of their integrity in the transition period, before the tests of purity and the Platonic training program were perfected. According to press reports, FBI director Webster already has taken this role upon himself in calling Senator Pressler, who resisted the FBI bribe offers, to tell the senator that "he had performed beautifully under pressure."

The *Washington Star* of Sunday, February 10, discounted the concern of some persons over the ABSCAM project, and dismissed criticism that ABSCAM employed the methods of dictatorship. "Who, for example, are the candidates for dictator?" asked the *Star*, evidently unaware that dictatorship is possible without a dictator.

It may be time for us to consider Brecht's suggestion, made to the communist government of East Germany when that government expressed disappointment in the workers who rioted in June of 1953, that the "government dissolve the people and elect another."

Eugene McCarthy

Eugene McCarthy is the former senator from Minnesota.

entire case, one Melvin Weinberg, 55, a convicted swindler who takes great pride in his 30 years of accomplishments as a master sting artist and confidence man. Weinberg had telephoned *Newsday* on February 3, the paper reported later, anxious to discuss his exploits as the FBI-recruited originator and key implementer of virtually every phase of the Arab scam. Weinberg apparently was involved in every case made by the government. He made every initial contact with the various middlemen, dangling the bait of big Arab money, and was present at almost every alleged payoff.

"I'm a swindler," the voluble Weinberg told *Newsday*. "The only difference between me and the congressmen I met on this case is that the public pays them a salary for stealing. . . . I'm going to be delighted to take the stand and let the people of this country know what their politicians are really like."

Weinberg, whose guaranteed-to-be-colorful testimony may be crucial in any cases against the congressmen, is supposed to be under heavy FBI guard, waiting to play his next role as star witness, but his tracks are already everywhere, detailing his exploits. A *New York Times* story describing foul-ups and hijinks in ABSCAM tells how when the FBI ran low on money Weinberg conned a politician out of $25,000 to help pay expenses of the operation. A scam within a scam.

Even more unsettling, another *Times* story by reporter Maitland reveals how an acquaintance of Weinberg's, who once served in the ABSCAM caper, then freelanced on his own, using the undercover operation's Arab sheik ploy to defraud various businessmen of more than $150,000. The businessmen

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complained to the FBI, but it appears that the federal agents failed to stop the scam, or even to warn them, out of fear of endangering their own operation.

The press has also revealed a good deal of disturbing behavior by the various middlemen whom Weinberg contacted and who brought public officials into the sting. And these revelations do not supply reassuring support to the Justice Department's contention that it did not entice and entrap congressmen into committing crimes.

From the outset, the Justice Department has contended its agents did not engage in entrapment. The sting was set up originally to catch people dealing in stolen art and securities. The focus shifted only when middlemen came to undercover agents and said they could deliver political services as well as other goods. At that point, the Justice Department says it did not step back, but had its undercover agents, posing as representatives of wealthy Arab sheiks, express interest to the middlemen in getting "political help" with business investments and immigration problems. It was the middlemen who then selected the public officials and brought them into the sting, the Justice Department insists. Only at this point, the government contends, did agents offer bribes in exchange for influence.

Even if one accepts in theory that this complicated scenario was a justified law enforcement operation, meeting constitutional requirements and government guidelines, its practical effects depended on the behavior of middlemen, over whom the government admittedly had little or no control.

In a penetrating story raising questions about the government tactics used in ABSCAM, *Newsday* correspondent Marro focused, as one example, on the activities of a New Jersey businessman, Joseph Silvestri, drawn to the sting seeking Arab investment money for real estate development. According to Marro's account, the agents told Silvestri that the sheik might be willing to invest $60 million, of which Silvestri would get a six-million-dollar broker's fee, but first needed to make contact with political figures to make sure everything would work smoothly.

At that point, according to the Marro story, Silvestri set out frantically to find helpful politicians. In rapid order, he apparently attempted to contact at least six House members, one US senator, a handful of New Jersey legislators, the legal counsel to the governor of New Jersey, the head of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, and the lieutenant governor of North Carolina. All but one of those politicians (a state legislator) rejected Silvestri's overtures. Before Silvestri's efforts ended, however, the agents had sought unsuccessfully to bribe Senator Larry Pressler, Republican of South Dakota (who thought he had gone to meet a potential campaign contributor), and unsuccessfully offered $50,000 to the son-in-law of Representative Peter Rodino, Democrat of New Jersey, simply to arrange a meeting for them with the powerful chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. Most of the officials contacted by Silvestri have commented angrily on his approaches.

Silvestri's activities are cited by critics as evidence that ABSCAM launched people as agents provocateurs to tempt officials who had no interest in taking bribes, rather than waiting in place for officials willing to be corrupted. Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California, a former FBI agent and liberal member of the House Judiciary Committee, questions whether such middlemen are being used by the Justice Department to sidestep department guidelines prohibiting criminal investigations except in cases where a crime is said to have been committed, or about to be committed. FBI agents and informers are prohibited from initiating a criminal act, but middlemen are not covered by the guidelines. "The FBI claims they aren't responsible for these people (middlemen), but maybe they should be," said Edwards. "These people are rolling around like loose cannons, and that's another thing that may be out of control."

Congress (and indeed some liberal critics of past federal law enforcement practices) has approved the FBI's new focus in recent years on the often interrelated problems of public corruption, white collar and organized crime, rather than on its historic concerns of auto thefts and bank robberies. FBI director Webster insists that undercover operations are not only proper, but critical to any successful investigation of these hard-to-detect crimes. If the government didn't recruit the services of shady characters and manipulate others, it undoubtedly would have greater difficulty ever getting at the top layer of those sophisticated criminal enterprises.

But we know enough about ABSCAM already to suggest that a lot more thinking is needed about how the government conducts such investigations. If the imminence of press disclosure helped persuade top officials to close down ABSCAM, then the press performed a service. There was abundant evidence that ABSCAM was rolling out of control—including filming by NBC of the undercover operation, and leaks to the press of evidence that properly should have been secretly considered by a grand jury.

Fortunately, Congress now has before it requests for budget increases for ABSCAM-type operations, as well as a legislative charter that would give the FBI specific authorization to conduct such operations in the future. Prudent safeguards and controls should be included in any such charter, or appropriations.

There is still the unfinished business of public officials accused in the press—but nowhere else—of committing seemingly odious but unspecified crimes. The government needs to process these cases with all possible speed, and the press needs to pay as much attention to the results as it did to the leaked accusations.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Performing Lives

A youth is seduced by an older man. They are lovers for several years, and the youth becomes dependent on the man. Then, in a moment of unhappiness, the youth marries an adoring girl. The man vindictively refuses to see the youth again. The youth, who has been showing signs of strain, goes irrecoverably insane.

A possibly good story. Name the characters Nijinsky, Diaghilev, and Romola Nijinsky, and it takes on mythic dimension. The best quality of *Nijinsky* is that it doesn't lean too heavily on Stage Two: Herbert Ross, the director, Nora Kaye, the producer, and Hugh Wheeler, the screenwriter, have reached for Stage One, the innate drama, the people as such: then they have let the rest of it—the fame of the characters and the glamour of the pre-war ballet world—follow.

It's a virtue, this method, but it brings its own defect. The picture asks to be judged as drama, not as a parade of historical figures, and as drama it has flaws. First, some facts have been colored or snipped. Examples: Nijinsky may have called himself a Polish peasant, as he does here, but he was the child of ballet dancers. Although Diaghilev was furious at him for marrying, it was not, as the film implies, the end of their professional relationship: Nijinsky subsequently toured the US with the Diaghilev company.

More grave, the writing of the script is commonplace—Wheeler is just a glossy Broadway scrivener—and the treatment of the characters is roughly analogous to the way the ballets themselves are treated: indicative samples rather than fulfillment. If a true dramatist had written this script—say Tennessee Williams at his best and frankest—it would have been a film that moved outward from its script, rather than a series of pictorial sequences with connective dialogue. What Wheeler's script gives us is, mostly, careful non-violations of the historical narrative.

Some of the casting doesn't help, or doesn't help enough. Leslie Browne, who was in Ross's previous ballet film, *The Turning Point*, plays Romola, and is an insufficient asset—a dough-faced girl whose performance is, like the script, not egregiously false. Then there is the more subtly inadequate performance of that good actor, Alan Bates, as Diaghilev. I've often admired Bates's growth in flexibility and depth, but what's missing here is a last fine measure of the aristocrat that Diaghilev was, a Baron de Charlus quality of hyper-refinement combined with an unswervable passion for the finest in art. The Diaghilev of Bates is a successful, competent, tasteful producer who, we might believe, worked his way up from office boy. His performance and person lack the air of the best-and-worst that Europe has made, the sort of diabolic, steely exquisiteness that Fernando Rey—a bit too old, admittedly—might have given it. John Barrymore played Diaghilev once, in *The Mad Genius* (1931), and although I can't remember the film, that casting is certainly more on target. (For Barrymore's picture, Adolf Bolm, who is sketched in *Nijinsky*, created a ballet.)

But the happy surprise of *Nijinsky* is George de la Peña in the lead. De la Peña, born in New York of Russian-Argentinian parents, is a member of the American Ballet Theater and a very good dancer: he is also an actor of intensity and truth, in a role that could easily have slipped into clichés of the Tormented Artist. Never. With Ross's help, I'm sure, but without enough help from Wheeler, de la Peña is always this particular young man—not a chunk of art history called Nijinsky—conscious of his talent, worried by his love life, insecure in the world, hot in his confusions. The two elements of the performance, man and dancer, actor and dancer/actor, are caught stunningly in the close camera work during the Faun (in *Afternoon of*). De la Peña plays Nijinsky playing/dancing the Faun. It's beautiful.

The famous Carla Fracci is right and charming as Karsavina, but Alan Badel tends to the unbearable as Baron de Gunzburg. (Badel is a middle-class caricature of what the actor of Diaghilev ought to have been.) Anton Dolin, the first ballet dancer I wanted to *be*, is witty as the aging Cecchetti, the company's ballet master, and Jeremy Irons does decently what he's given to do as Mikhail Fokine.

That raises a troublesome matter, because of Fokine's relative size in ballet history. True, this film is not about him. True, he states in his autobiography that he was prejudiced against homosexuality; that when he quarreled with Diaghilev about the precedence given to Nijinsky's choreography over his own, he "shouted that the ballet company was turning from a fine art into a perverted degeneracy." (He also states that Nijinsky took elements for his *Faun* from a previous Fokine composition.) But one couldn't tell from the film that this squabbling Fokine was a genius, of immeasurably greater importance to the art of ballet than Nijinsky.

The ballet atmosphere, as one would

Films Worth Seeing

Angi Vera. Hungary, 1948. Corruption of truth in the name of truth. Small and neat as a scalpel.

Best Boy. Ira Wohl's unexploitative good documentary about his mentally retarded cousin of 52. But the cousin's quiet, lovely mother is really the center.

The Trials of Alger Hiss. John Lowenthal's 166-minute documentary tries to be objective. Newsreels interwoven with recent interviews. Well done, intelligently worrisome.

Our Hitler. Not a documentary. Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's seven-hour collection of film poems seems to say: "I can't sleep. These are my nightmares about Germany, the world, the future." Immense, plainly flawed, powerful.

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expect from Ross, is dwelled in knowledgeably. The condensations of the dances are handled with the least possible brutality by Ross and his editor, William Reynolds. The luxe hotels and theater foyers and carriages and salons, the boxes of chocolates and the champagne and frills and flowers, are all handled like garniture laid on by a master chef. Douglas Slocombe, a cinematographer who overdoes color generally, overdoes it here aptly. The original choreography by Kenneth MacMillan and the recreations done with others seem authentic to a dance layman, as do the recreations of the Leon Bakst designs. And the music is fruitily well played by the Los Angeles under John Lanchbery.

A large and lush film, with the sense and courage to try for more than spectacular historical pageant. It doesn't quite succeed in either flying or delving. I was never bored, always hopeful; but I was left still hoping when it was over.

Coal Miner's Daughter is about another performer, Loretta Lynn, the country music writer and singer. The first half or so, about her background and struggles, is exceptionally good, full of flavor and interest. The rest of it, after Lynn becomes a success, is a re-run of *A Star is Born* (Streisand edition) and *The Rose* and others—more about what hell it is to go out there every night, the crucifixion by and to applause. It's probably all true, but it's certainly all trite. I was completely fascinated and moved, however, by the life in Appalachia—Butcher Holler, near Van Lear, Kentucky—and by Lynn's married life after the age of 14 out in the state of Washington.

Michael Apted, the Englishman who directed the fussy *Agatha*, does very much better on a non-native heath. Apted disproves yet again the accepted wisdom that foreign directors can't understand a place, particularly a relatively inbred one. Tom Rickman's script, from Lynn's autobiography, "speaks" right, most of the way. Arthur Schmidt, the editor, has the same problem as Reynolds in *Nijinsky*—to make unjarring condensations of performances—and he does well, too.

Three performances and a face confirm this film. Sissy Spacek—yes, I'm flabbergasted—is simple and faithful as Lynn. Spacek's face is no more of an actor's instrument than it ever was, but given a human being to play instead of a weirdo, given a director concerned with acting, she makes that woman exist. She sings the songs herself, nicely, and she has mastered the Appalachian accent. So has Tommy Lee Jones, her husband, who also gets nice inflections in his performance. Levon Helm, the hard-working father agonized by the early marriage of the daughter he adores, is fine-cut and true. As his worn wife, Phyllis Boyens has much less to do, but her Delacroix face is that familiar odd phenomenon, classic beauty in a proletarian setting.

The film has two sources of strength that embrace the above. The home of the young Loretta, the coal-miner father and his wife and their eight children, dramatizes the truth that children, the world over, are a poor family's treasure. (See Kaneto Shindo's *The Island* for only one of multiple other examples on film.) Watching this family's life makes you a bit envious, poverty notwithstanding.

And the film is an instance of another ancient and universal truth. Poor people sing. Rich people don't sing about their lives: they listen, or they sing poor people's songs. (Can you imagine a furred Loretta Lynn singing "I'm a Rich Stockbroker's Daughter?") The fact that, after the event, country music has become a huge industry has nothing to do with its beginnings—beginnings that continue.

Some of us keep asking for American films that speak of the variedness of America. Much of the time this picture does part of that job. It means a lot more to me than the bloated *Nashville*, with its strain to be an All-American metaphor. *Coal Miner's Daughter* lays in the warmer colors of the scene for which the neglected *Payday* (1973) painted the darker side.

Jim Miller on pop music

A Parallel Life

Jonathan Richman, one of the most enigmatic figures in music today, was born in Boston on May 16, 1951. According to the terse autobiography made available by his record company, "I was very moved by music ever since I can remember. My parents would sing little melodies to me once in a while when I was two and three years old. The kind of melodies my mother liked and her sense of wit and funny rhythms have found their way into the music I make."

Other aspects of his life were not so enchanting. "I started chasing girls from age five onwards. They usually weren't as interested in me as I was in them, and this made me confused and hurt."

A precocious romantic, he grew up with wounded pride. When he first heard rock'n'roll, he felt right at home. When he was 10, his escape consisted of songs like "Don't Hang Up" by the Orlons, "Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?" by the Shirelles, "The Wanderer" by Dion: songs of longing, doubt, and despair, all focused on a quest for peace that only an impossibly perfect love seemed certain to bestow.

"By the time I was 15 I was pretty lonely. High school and I didn't understand each other well at all." He decided to drop out. The musical scene was changing, too. The romanticism of rock in the early 1960s was being supplanted by the kinetic rage of Bob Dylan, the chemical mysteries of the Jefferson Airplane, the growing artistic ambition of the Beatles.

By Richman's own account, though, only one band mattered to him. "I heard the Velvet Underground and got inspired. . . ." Fresh out of high school, he moved to New York City, where he could follow his favorite group firsthand.

It was a strange mongrel of a band. Drawing its personnel from Long Island and lower Manhattan, the Velvet Underground mixed the vanguard artiness of conservatory-trained violist John Cale with the tough-minded innocence of lyricist and singer Lou Reed. Cale's aesthetic was minimalism; Reed's stance was numbed romanticism. Andy Warhol hired them in 1966 to accompany his grand happening of hip sadism, "The Exploding Plastic Inevitable." A pioneering venture in mixed media, the "Inevitable" featured snatches of old Warhol films shown on walls festooned with whips vibrating to the roar of the Underground, a poker-faced quartet who plied massively amplified white noise with the stately reserve of the Budapest String Quartet and the hell-bent intensity of some high school band strung out on speed. When you could

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hear the lyrics at all, they were about sin and salvation, heroin and heartbreak—bracing stuff, and very outré.

This was the phenomenon that kindled the ambition of young Jonathan Richman. Lou Reed's deadpan vocals suggested that anybody could make a mark in rock, trained voice or no. All a person needed was a commitment to sing frankly about the circumstances of his life, no matter how eccentric these might seem. So when Richman returned to Massachusetts, he "took up guitar, and drove into Boston from my suburb, to terrorize audiences with my four-and-a-third-note range, and crude guitar playing."

He knew three chords. His untrained voice was scarcely more than a holler. Yet he would stand for hours on the Cambridge Common, strumming and singing his own songs, enduring indifference and taunts, gladly accepting the attention of those who stayed to stare.

According to his autobiography, he got lonely singing by himself: "so I put a band together when I was 19 and called it the Modern Lovers." It consisted of keyboard, bass, and drums, besides Richman, who composed, sang, and played guitar. Cast in the mold of the Velvet Underground, the group played static riffs with churning energy, while Richman sang with matter-of-fact directness. In stance and style, they were aggressively anti-hippie, rejecting drugs and "casual" relationships. Instead, Richman sang of times and places and women that always seemed to slip away, leaving him alone with his hopes.

The band's signature became "Roadrunner." The song was thrown over a mechanical drone from the band, pulsing like "Gloria" stalled in overdrive, roaring down the highway with prose tumbling in Richman's monotonic dialect. The lyric was about driving around Boston on Route 128; it was also about loneliness and love and speed; and it was finally about the romance and mystery of rock'n'roll. A great song in a familiar tradition, it belongs beside "Maybelline" and "I Get Around."

The Modern Lovers began to attract an audience; a cult of critics followed. One writer lauded Richman as "the archetypal American weirdo." Executives flew in to hear the band. Hip labels showed interest. It was an era dominated by Carole King, James Taylor, and Led Zeppelin. But several companies were ready to stake small fortunes on "glitter rock," as it came to be called. It might not sell—but with rock and roll, who could ever be sure?

After a bidding war, the Modern Lovers were signed for a relatively large advance. They were given studio time with John Cale, who had become a record producer after leaving the Velvet Underground. It was not a happy choice. Richman, dissatisfied by the songs cut with Cale, refused to go forward. He stopped recording. He resisted all hints that his band might be made into arty minimalists, or promoted as "glitter rock." His record label, anxious at the delays, demanded to know what was going on. Richman became unavailable.

The breaking point came over "Roadrunner." Record companies naturally expect their clients to perform

photo of Jonathan Richman

their hits. Performers usually oblige. Richman's label, though, had grown uneasy about the behavior of its high-rent weirdo. An executive approached other band members to inquire whether Richman, if he ever got his act together, was going to tour and sing "Roadrunner" at every stop, so that everyone could make some money and the band could sample the other fruits of fame.

News of the pressure came back to Richman. Outraged, he announced that he never would bow to such demands. This was *his* music, and he would perform it whenever and wherever he pleased. That message, relayed back to the label, caused understandable panic. A phone call was placed directly to the recalcitrant. What was this talk about refusing to perform "Roadrunner"? Richman was unyielding. He told the executive to shove off.

By 1973, his career was in shambles. The members of the band, tired by the squabbles, drifted apart. Meanwhile, the winds of fashion were shifting. In the argot of the industry, glitter rock proved a "stiff." It didn't sell.

So Jonathan Richman, having snubbed his big break, hit the streets of Cambridge again, a one-man band performing his own songs whenever and wherever he pleased, on the Common, in front of Holyoke Center, beside the Harvard Coop.

If the story stopped here, there would be little reason to retell it. But in 1975, Richman popped up again, on a small California label called Beserkley. He started to make albums. So far, he has released four new ones, and an anthology of old tapes (including the unfinished material made with Cale). He has had a few hits in England, and is a star in Holland. Yet in America, his recent work generally has been ignored by programmers and critics, especially those enamored of the punk rock that the Modern Lovers originally prefigured. (His first keyboard player joined the Talking Heads, perhaps the most important new wave band in America; and Johnny Rotten, while leading the Sex Pistols, cited Richman as his favorite singer.)

Reasons for his small following here are not hard to find. Just when the punks were charting the abyss, he started singing about the birds and the bees. Just when the music grew angry and loud, Richman threw out his amps and began writing earnest love songs. For the past five years, he has been performing simple tunes with titles like "I'm Nature's Mosquito," "Abominable Snowman in the Market," "My Love is a Flower (Just Beginning to Bloom)," "Fly into the Mystery," and "Ice Cream Man." Listeners who liked the first version of the Modern Lovers generally consider the new songs precious and soft-headed. Some wonder whether they are rock and roll at all: folk music for flakes seems more like it.

To give some impression of his current style, an account of one recorded performance may help. "Party in the Woods Tonight," like most of his recent songs, was cut in one take, with two acoustic guitars and slap bass. It sounds rough, crude, and, in most respects, utterly old-fashioned. The word "party" already evokes a world where being "at the hop" was the point of being alive. The surreal situation—a woodland gala with dancing humans and leering monsters—recalls novelty hits like "Monster Mash." The chord changes are familiar, the background vocals a blend of off-pitch moans redolent of the 1957 hit "Over the Mountain." The central

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refrain, finally, revolves around a rockabilly cliché: "We gonna get on the floor/Let's rock some more."

The narrative, however, is something else again. It involves an internal dialogue between monsters and men. The monsters want to join the party. They ask permission and promise to behave. The men finally agree. But the monsters become bored. "Well," asks one, "what kind of party is this one?/Us monsters are used to having fun." The response is unblinking. "Well, easy now, monsters, don't be snide/Can't you all tell we're just repressed inside." On that note, the song shuffles into a hoarse coda, repeating the refrain with a gaggle of new lines ("We invite the loons/Cause they remember all the tunes").

On its surface, "Party in the Woods Tonight" might seem an exercise in camp zaniness. Yet Richman sings the song with unrestrained exuberance, commitment, feeling—and without a trace of coyness or condescension. Beneath the lyrics and their cheerful veneer, moreover, lurks the sense that Jonathan's imaginary monsters don't always wait to be invited: in its own offhand way, the song summons a strange world where play sounds vaguely unsettling and what is "fun" seems wide open.

Richman's recent work is unique. When compared with his own early work, its most peculiar aspect may be the evidence it gives of an unusual kind of personal conversion—a stubborn resolution to make music that affirms Richman's own convictions, particularly his trust in a common decency. Most critics consider this resolve self-righteous; but all of them recognize the symptoms of a change. As a perceptive though unsympathetic colleague put it, "he couldn't take his hang-ups about sex, so he decided to regress instead."

His reformation clearly hinges on the meaning of love. In a rare interview, he explained his own convictions in 1973:

> 'Old Love' is the whole Casanova thing: Don Juan trying to get as many girls as he can. He's proud of fucking girls. He likes the power and the whole ego thing of sex. I think that whole form of love is outmoded because it really isn't love. When I say 'Modern Love,' I mean the time when you don't have to force the issue, when you don't have to prove anything to yourself. When you think you're alright. When you don't need sex to feel alright.

Similar sentiments appear clearly enough in his early songs, particularly once they are purged of their snide

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asides and put-downs. In his recent songs, by contrast, the message is unambiguous: love always appears, somewhat incredibly, as a pure instinct; by allowing it free play, a person cannot go wrong; by showing it to others in the form of respect, it can make anyone "feel alright"; by making people feel alright, it can make them feel at one with their world.

To most of my fellow critics, such sentiments seem hopelessly naive: by now, everyone ought to know better. Besides, if this is his message, why say it with rock and roll?

Richman certainly rejects large parts of its tradition. The fast life—symbolized, in rock iconography, by the car—no longer holds his attention. (He rarely performs "Roadrunner" anymore.) He avoids sheer volume, the outsized gestures deemed essential whenever rock is performed in vast arenas. He rejects the theater of cruelty, the delight in decadence, the belief that art is bravest when it flirts with evil. He would never sing "Heroin." He has no "Sympathy for the Devil." When the Sex Pistols chime "no future," he punches the button on his radio.

He would rather hear "Teenager in Love" by Dion and the Belmonts. For he believes that rock and roll ought to be about good feelings. In the past few years, he seems to have stopped listening to current rock altogether. He prefers the vocal groups of the 1950s, old rockabilly, Jamaican reggae, African tribal music, Japanese koto music, even traditional hymns like "Angels are Watching Over Me." He treats rock and roll as a ritual, a sacred rite, a universal folk music, a shared fairy tale that ought to tap what is innocent and timeless in us all.

It's not that he wishes to deny our demons. Rather, he approaches them with a smile, invites them to dinner, and tries to catch them laughing. Richman's art of escape, when it's right, is like being on a roller coaster: the ride makes being afraid seem like fun. He plays with the seriousness of a child—he evokes that kind of freedom, its awkwardness and failures intact.

Recently, I had the opportunity to see Richman perform in an unlikely but ideal setting: a New England living room. Since last summer, when he dissolved the most recent edition of the Modern Lovers, he has been working by himself, traveling with an electric guitar and an amp the size of a toaster. During the past winter, he retired to Maine, where, apart from a few appearances in local taverns, he generally kept to himself. One day in January, however, we both ended up at a small college in Bar Harbor, on a panel discussing, of all things, the future of rock and roll. Afterward, at a small party consisting of people who, for the most part, had never heard of Jonathan Richman, he gave an impromptu and unpaid concert that lasted nearly two hours. (This, for him, is not unusual: former neighbors report that he regularly sang for children outside his Cambridge apartment.)

Rock fans are used to peering across canyons of concrete to see superstars reduced to the size of trained fleas. But a star in a living room almost seems a contradiction in terms—until you have seen Jonathan Richman.

In such small quarters, the distance between performer and audience is abolished; any hesitation is transparent, even the slightest gesture acquires a certain weight. Stripped of their props, most rock stars would freeze. But Jonathan Richman, who loves attention, responded with disarming eagerness, as if, once he had been asked, he couldn't wait to start playing.

His performance was rock and roll magic. While striking the poses of a kid who wants to grow up to be a rock star, he scanned the room to keep eye contact, responding to moods with a flowing variety of songs, some about love and longing, others about Willie Mays and a little dinosaur. He juggled lyrics and finessed melodies. He pounded his guitar and stamped his foot. And though he had sung these same songs many times before, each sounded fresh, something special. The power of his presence, finally, became the vulnerability and confidence he managed to convey simultaneously: by surrendering himself to the moment, he created the illusion, while we all watched, that each of us might enjoy doing the same, if only we dared.

That afternoon, Richman had startled his audience by announcing abruptly that he was now concerned with *nakedness*. At first, I was baffled too. But watching him that night, I suddenly grasped what he had meant: an art without shame or inhibition, irony or cynicism; a music of warmth and humor, openness and integrity.

These are modest virtues. Yet in the context of rock today they seem downright bizarre. It is tempting to call Richman "great" simply because of them. But that would be misleading. By conventional standards, he is not much of a singer or guitarist or composer. Listeners accustomed to being titillated and astonished probably won't find enough on the surface of his act—and it is, of course, an act—to get beyond it.

To me, though, his music matters a great deal. I am someone who hasn't outgrown rock and roll, in part because I make a living by writing about it, in part because I can still find pleasure in listening to it. Jonathan Richman strikes me as something special. In his best new work—in songs like "Summer Morning" and "Party in the Woods Tonight"—he evokes an aspect of a distant past that nowadays I too often forget: a time when an uncomplicated song, like a summer day with nothing to do, let me get lost in wonder. That sounds mawkish. But if popular art spurns its primitive power to enchant—and if this culture mistakes a simple decency for failed nerve—then just what game are we playing?

1943: The Victory That Never Was
by John Grigg

(Hill and Wang, a division of Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $12.50)

Winston Churchill once said that "the most difficult undertaking in war is to wage war with allies, except, of course, to wage war with no allies at all." World War II is the sovereign test of this judgment, since it offers us the greatest coalition in history. Historians continue to debate the controversies surrounding Berlin, the second front, the Anglo-Saxons, and De Gaulle, and the multitude of other problems that coalition warfare brought to the highest levels of government. The latest and best study is this book by John Grigg. Compact and well written, Grigg's analysis of the conflicts among the Allies is fresh and penetrating, and he does not hesitate to offer his opinion about how they

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might have been resolved.

Nineteen hundred and forty-two was a critical year for the Allies. The British in North Africa had been driven all the way back to El Alamein. The Russians were under tremendous pressure from the Germans, and there was the ever-present danger that they might collapse, thus releasing German armies for employment against the Western Allies. As General Alan Brooke, chief of staff of the British Joint Chiefs, noted in his diary, "The war was at its most critical stage; the enemy, who had all but reached his goal—in Russia, in the Pacific, in North Africa, in the Atlantic—was still massing for the attack. At any moment he might break through at some point in the straining Allied lines."

There was considerable debate in the Allied high command about how to gain the initiative. On one point the Americans and the British were in complete agreement: "On the American side, neither the President nor his principal military adviser, General Marshall, needed any persuading that the correct strategy would be to beat Hitler first. This was already their settled conviction." But how to go about defeating Hitler was another matter. At the outset of the war Churchill believed that massive bombing would so weaken Germany that the Allies would be able to land at many points around the periphery of Europe. But as the bombing went on and German war-making capacity seemed to improve, Churchill became disillusioned with the lack of success of the bombing effort. He was concerned, too, about the slaughter of thousands of civilians. Grigg writes that he once said to his chief airman, Portal, "that in war it was not necessary to be nice, only to be right. Area bombing had the double effect of being thoroughly nasty and wrong."

Germany was far from beaten in 1942 and 1943. The decisions in 1942 were not to rely exclusively on the bombing offensive. They revolved around whether or not to land in northern France in 1943. This was a view advanced by General George C. Marshall. The British, on the other hand, constantly brought up the matter of the control of the Mediterranean, causing the Americans to suspect that the British were more interested in keeping the sea lanes open to their colonies, Australia, New Zealand, and India, than they were in defeating Germany. But the British had far more combat experience in fighting the Germans than the Americans, who had none. And the so-called "soft underbelly" of Europe had been a preoccupation of Winston Churchill's since the disaster at the Dardanelles in World War I. So the arguments in the Combined Chiefs of Staff went on.

In 1942 I was on the staff of the Airborne Command stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I was responsible for planning, training, and the development of doctrine for the employment of airborne troops. Brigadier General William C. Lee was in command. In the late spring of 1942 General Lee was directed to fly to Washington to confer with the British about the possibilities of a cross-channel attack in 1943, which had been a fixation of General George C. Marshall and the Army Staff for some time. A cover plan had been evolved that the Allies hoped would trick Hitler into believing that the main attack, when it came, would be against Calais, the shortest distance from England to the Continent. General Lee returned in a few weeks bringing

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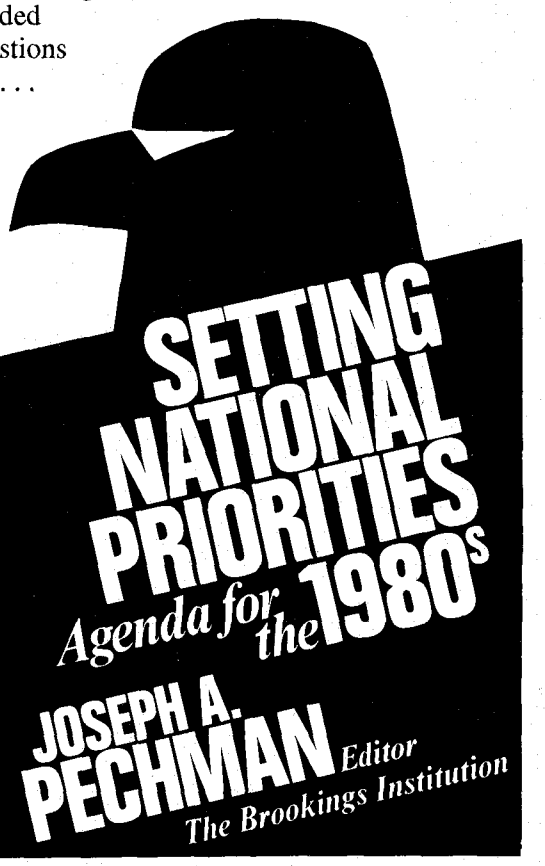

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Life: The First Decade, 1936-1945 edited by Doris C. O'Neil

(New York Graphic Society; $9.95, paper)

The 200 photographs in this absorbing book were selected from 100,000 taken by photographers associated with *Life* in its first decade. On assignment for the magazine, most of the photographers (among them such famous names as Margaret Burke-White, Robert Capa, Edward Weston, Berenice Abbott) were aiming above all to report, not to create works of art. But more than three decades later, these photographs are not stale news; they still report, and with what time has shown to be artistic, not simply journalistic, power. The largest group of pictures documents World War II, a world come apart. There also are photographs of more stable life in America—portraits of prominent figures, glimpses of families on their farms. But perhaps the photographs that capture public and private realities colliding—a grieving woman at President Roosevelt's funeral, a small boy trotting past corpses at Belsen extermination camp—carry us most forcefully into that past world. These people confronted history there on the road; we in turn confront those past moments in photographs.

Churchill at his easel. Photo by Hans Wild, 1945.

with him several maps of the Calais crossing site. He directed that they be tacked on the walls in his headquarters building where anyone walking by could see them. It seemed to me that they belonged in the War Room under wraps. But I didn't know then of Operation FORTITUDE, which was the code name given to the deception plan. General Lee's greatest preoccupation, however, was the attitude of the British military people that he met. He thought that they were haughty, discourteous, and held the Americans in rather low regard. In the beginning this attitude frequently hampered our relations with the British: our ability to plan, organize, and carry on combat together.

By early 1942, the author claims, Churchill had serious doubts about the fighting quality of the British troops. He writes, "Churchill's opposition to any large-scale landing in northwest Europe during 1942 was reinforced by his private doubts about the morale and fighting quality of the British troops, after the trauma of Singapore." In May of 1942 he was visited by the Russian Foreign Minister, V. M. Molotov. Churchill told him that "the British were not committed to any cross-Channel operation in 1942." To convince Roosevelt that the first combined Allied attacks should be made against northwest Africa and not across the Channel, Churchill sent a special emissary to Washington, Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Chief of Combined Operations. The author claims that Roosevelt had a soft spot for royalty as well as a soft spot for the Navy, and hence was very impressed with Mountbatten. Mountbatten convinced him that their first combined operation should be against northwest Africa. Roosevelt and Mountbatten agreed that Operation TORCH should be launched later in 1942. General Marshall and his colleagues then agreed with President Roosevelt that TORCH should be launched by September 15, and that the cross-Channel invasion should await the outcome in the Mediterranean.

TORCH commenced at 1:00 a.m., Sunday, November 8, 1942. The great uncertainty was the attitude of the French: would they resist the Allies? General Giraud, a senior French officer, was brought to Gibraltar to confer with General Eisenhower just before the landings were made. Giraud demanded that he be placed in command of the entire operation. This was out of the question. By coincidence, Admiral Darlan, a Vichy appointee of the Petain-Laval government, was in Algiers visiting a sick son. He was the senior and by far the most influential Frenchman in Algiers. Impressed by the might of the Allied attack, Darlan, ever the opportunist, decided to sever his ties with Petain and Vichy and join forces with the Americans and the British. Thus we found ourselves working with two of the senior officers of the Vichy government. John Grigg analyzes this situation in some depth. Our recognition of the Vichy government in the first place, and then our collaboration with Darlan and Giraud in North Africa, irked De Gaulle more than anything that we had done in the war up to that time. Many years later, a distinguished Frenchman told me that De Gaulle never forgave us for our relations with the Vichy government. He used a somewhat unpleasant analogy and said "that like a camel, De

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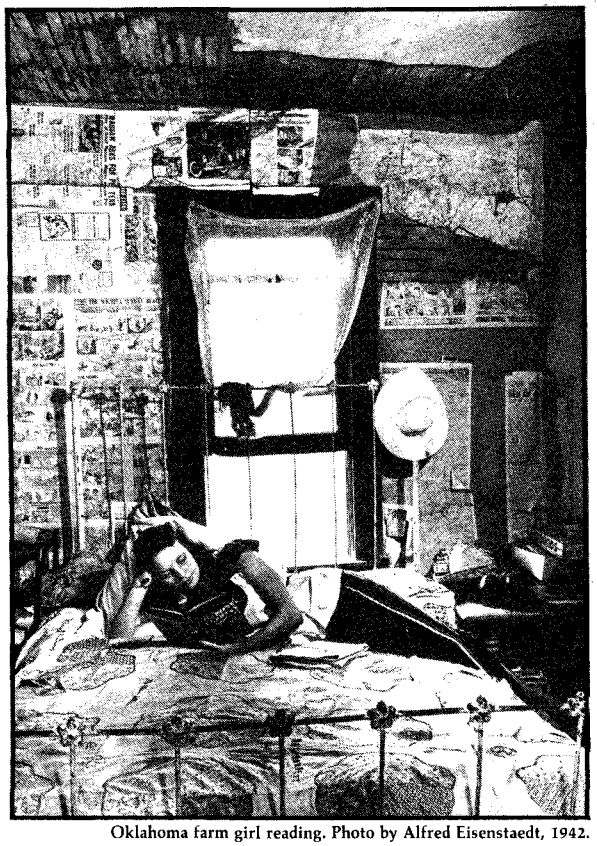

Oklahoma farm girl reading. Photo by Alfred Eisenstaedt, 1942.

Woman at Roosevelt's funeral procession. Photo by George Tames, 1945.

Boy walks past corpses at Belsen extermination camp. Photo by George Rodger, 1945.

Gaulle regurgitated and it always came up Vichy, Vichy."

The author believes that if we had recognized De Gaulle as the leader of the French people early and given him our fullest support, the war could have been brought to an end in 1943. As he expresses it,

> The Anglo-Saxons' shabby treatment of De Gaulle was symptomatic of an even more tragic error in their war policy—their failure to note the multiplying signs of French revival and, therefore, to realize that France was the key to victory. Instead of bothering so much about 'knocking Italy out of the war,' they ought, surely, to have been devoting their thoughts to bringing France back into it.

Early in 1943 Winston Churchill and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt met in Casablanca to confer on the next steps to take. The decision was made to seize the island of Sicily, using Montgomery's Eighth Army and Patton's Seventh Army. The high command did not consider it to be a particularly tough nut to crack. We were told that there were no Germans on the island. Actually, there were two Panzer Divisions. I commanded the American parachute forces landing on the island and it was a very hard and costly battle. Still, in six weeks Patton arrived in Messina just ahead of Montgomery.

The question then became where to go next. We were encouraged to believe that Rome could be captured by Allied airborne troops. Plans were made but changed at the last moment, and the airborne forces were used to reinforce bridgeheads at Salerno. Once we were into Salerno, we were into Italy. As Grigg expresses it so well, "It wasn't a case of 'knocking Italy out of the war,' as the British described it. It was a case of dragging the Allies into the war." Into Italy—into rugged, mountain defenses that would prove to be very costly to the Allies as they moved slowly up the boot. A year later, after parachuting into Normandy, I remember seeing posters on the walls of French buildings of a tortoise crawling up the boot of Italy and the captions in French explaining the slow progress of the Allies in getting on with the war. The Germans made the most of the propaganda possibilities of our involvement in Italy, and fought a very successful defensive battle.

When it came time to cross the English Channel and reenter France, the Allies brought along their own military government people to take over the government of France. They gave the entire effort the unpleasant acronym AMGOT (Allied Military Government for Occupied Territories). Nora Beloff in her excellent little book, *The General Says No*, reports Denis Brogan as saying the silliest thing he did in World War II was to train Allied officers to govern France. The Allies also planned on using occupation currency as though the French franc was worthless. To add to their embarrassment, they misspelled a word on the occupational currency notes. De Gaulle was furious.

John Grigg summarizes the book by canvassing the objections to landings in 1943. The argument "that it was impossible to land in 1943," he disagrees with, believing that we could have and should have made the crossing. Next, "The Atlantic Wall is too strong": he points out that it was at its weakest in 1943 and did not get strengthened until Rommel took over the organization of

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its defense. He quotes Field Marshal Karl von Rundstedt, the German commander-in-chief in the West, as having reported to Hitler in 1943 "that the so-called wall had no depth and little surface." He discusses the argument that there was not enough landing craft and points out that the US Navy actually transferred landing craft from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They could have been brought to England for the crossing. In a summation entitled "The Victory That Might Have Been," he lays particular stress on the point that the Allies should have realized that:

> it was more important to bring France back into the war than to knock Italy out of it, that De Gaulle was the French leader most deserving of confidence, that there should have been no nonsense about imposing AMGOT on a liberated France, and that De Gaulle himself should have been consulted about the invasion plans, and should have been encouraged to land in France as soon as possible after D-Day.

He concludes with the poignant thought that an invasion in 1943 might have saved hundreds of thousands of Jews and other Europeans from massacre. "It is the contention of this book that if the British and the Americans had landed in France in 1943, their triumph would have been greater and the accompanying tragedies less."

Grigg's arguments leave me with one gnawing concern, and it applies especially to the Americans. I refer to the state of their equipment and training in 1943; they were not ready to face Panzers with several years of battle experience. I have never believed the statement attributed to the Duke of Wellington that "the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton." It was won on the battlefields of Spain and Portugal. The troops were seasoned and hardened there, and when the challenge of Waterloo came, they were ready. It is true that the Americans had fought the Germans in North Africa, but we did not exactly cover ourselves with glory. But by the time we finished Sicily in 1943, we were ready for a crossing in 1944 and I mean by "ready" that we were able to do the job with less loss of life and greater confidence. Normany was a certain success from the moment we landed. Despite this point of disagreement, *1943: The Victory That Never Was* is the best analysis of World War II in Europe that I have read.

James M. Gavin

Lieutenant General James M. Gavin, USA Retired, is a director of Arthur D. Little, Inc. and author of *On to Berlin* (Viking).

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The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five
by Doris Lessing

(Knopf; $10)

> With a sigh that she refused to deepen into a groan, she again saw him as her fellow prisoner, and marvelling that this taut, grief-marked man could be the gross and fleshy Ben Ata of their first days, she enclosed him, as he did her, and their lovemaking was all a consoling and a reassurance. When his hand felt for their child, now responding quite vigorously to their lovemaking, as if wishing to share in it—as if it were the promise of a festival—it was with a respect and a promise not to an extension of himself, or of her, but a salute to the possibilities of them both; a considered and informed salute, at that, for Al·Ith, feeling the delicately contained strength of those enquiring fingers, knew that the potentialities he acknowledged were for the unknown and the unexpected, as well as for familiar delight. For this union of incompatibles could not be anything less than a challenge.

A challenge it is, and a reward. The second of the *Canopus in Argos* series of novels is finer-grained and stronger than *Shikasta* [see Ms. Le Guin's review, *TNR*, October 13, 1979], the first. *The Marriages* may be read for the pure pleasure of reading it, a tale unencumbered by metaphysical machinery. The Canopans and Sirians, the superhuman powers of good and evil of *Shikasta*, stay offstage this time. The manipulations of the Sirians are only hinted at: the powers of good, here known as the Providers, emit directives by Voice (like Joan of Arc's Voices) and, entertainingly, by beating an invisible drum. The Providers—I kept thinking of Scott's Antarctic crew, who referred to Providence, upon which they depended quite consciously if not always successfully, as "Provvy"—the Providers command Al·Ith, ruler of Zone Three, and Ben Ata, ruler of Zone Four, to marry. Both obey the order not happily but unquestioningly. Theirs not to reason why (why not?). Once they meet, however, the two human beings begin to behave very humanly indeed, and what might have been a fable enacted by wooden puppets twitching on the strings of allegory becomes a lively and lovable novel—a novel in the folktale mode, bordering on the mythic.

The theme is one of the major themes of both myth and novel: marriage. Lessing's treatment of it is complex and flexible, passionate and compassionate, with a rising vein of humor uncommon in her work, both welcome and appropriate. Marriage in all modes. Marriage sensual, moral, mental, political. Marriage of two people, an archetypally sensitive lady and an archetypally tough soldier. Marriage of female and male; of masculine and feminine; of intuitional and sensational; of duty and pleasure. Marriage of their two countries, which reflect all these opposites and more, including the oppositions wealth-poverty, peace-war. And then suddenly a marriage with Zone Five is ordered, a second marriage,

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a tertium quid, startling and inevitable.

It may be worth noting that this series of oppositions does not overlap very far with the old Chinese system of opposites, the Yin and Yang. At female-male and perhaps at intuitional-sensational they coincide; otherwise Lessing simply omits the dark, wet, cold, passive, etc., the Yin side of the T'ai Chi figure. Her dialectic of marriage takes place almost wholly in terms of Yang. Its process therefore is Hegelian, struggle and resolution, without the option of a maintained balance (the marriage cannot last). This is worth mentioning as illustrative of the extreme Westernness of Lessing's ethic and metaphysic. The *Canopus* books propose a cosmic viewpoint: but it turns out to be so purely European an explanation of human destiny that anyone even slightly familiar with other religious or philosophical systems must find it inadequate, if not presumptuous. In her introduction to *Shikasta*, referring to "the sacred literatures of all races and nations," Lessing said: "It is possible we make a mistake when we dismiss them as quaint fossils from a dead past." Possible, indeed. Who but a bigot or an ignoramus would do so? Lessing is neither, but her parochialism is disturbing.

The landscapes and societies of Zones Three, Four, and Five (and, most tantalizingly, Two) are sketched, not detailed. One cannot live in these lands, as one can in Middle Earth. These are the countries of parable, intellectual nations which one can only travel through in a closed car; but the scenery is vastly interesting, and one may wish one could at least stop and get out. The quick-paced plot is kept distanced by several devices: by use of the folktale ambiance of faraway lands once upon a time, by frequent reference to paintings of the events recounted, and by having the tale mostly told by an elderly male Chronicler of Zone Three.

At first the protagonists also appear at a distance, a bit larger than life, all of a piece, heroic. Perhaps the Ben Hur lurking in the name "Ben Ata" is even deliberate (though I wish the Alice trying to lisp her way out of Al·Ith were not so audible). As the two enter upon their difficult marriage, however, and are driven through all the changes of fear, patience, lust, rage, liking, masochism, ecstasy, jealousy, rebellion, dependence, friendship, and the rest, they become smaller, more distant, more complicated. They get older. Their heroism is no longer easy; it has become painful; it has become real. By having the courage to use these great stock characters, the queen and the king, and to take them seriously as people, Lessing has presented a personal drama of general significance, skillfully and without falsification. Her portrait of a marriage is perfectly clear-sighted and admirably inconclusive. Moralist that she is, she makes no judgment here. Character is destiny: her characters make themselves a human destiny, far more impressive than any conceivable pseudo-divine five-year plan for the good of Zones Three to Five. They might even have risen to tragedy, had the author not opened heaven's trapdoor to them to prevent that chance.

Though accurate, that last sentence is probably unfair. After all, *The Marriages* aspires to myth, not to tragedy. Zone Two is certainly an unconventional and attractive heaven, or stage on the way to heaven; one may be content to leave Al·Ith to it at last. Perhaps it is only meanmindedness that makes me distrust Zone One, fearing that it will turn out to be not simply better, but perfectly good, and therefore longing to find something wrong with it: just as we discovered, gradually, guided gently by our author, what was wrong with the utopian Zone Three, that now quite familiar country where nobody is possessive or destructive or has bad taste in furniture.

Indeed the Manichaean-Calvinistic hierarchy, the closed system implied by the structure and the more vatic bits of *Shikasta*, seems here to give way to an open course of relative values—a way, a human way. Or does Lessing not agree with the Chronicler who tells her tale so well? I think she does.

> We chroniclers do well to be afraid when we approach those parts of our histories (our natures) that deal with evil, the depraved, the benighted. Describing, we become. . . .
>
> I tell you that goodness—what we in our ordinary daylight selves call goodness: the ordinary, the decent—these are nothing without the hidden powers that pour forth continually from their shadow sides. . . .
>
> In those high places there is a dark side, and who knows but that it may be very dark. . . .

However, the tale is not a fearful one, but kindly, careful, cheerful; its teller, knowing the darkness, faces the light.

Ursula K. Le Guin

Ursula K. Le Guin's new novel is *The Beginning Place* (Harper & Row).

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Coming:

Joyce Carol Oates on Short Stories.

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Part of Nature, Part of Us: Modern American Poets by Helen Vendler

(Harvard University Press; $15)

To begin with a judgment widely shared, if not a truth universally acknowledged: Helen Vendler is the best poetry reviewer in America. Her virtues are a rigorous attending to verbal structure and texture; the ability to quote appositely and economically; a sure though not a too-exclusive taste; above all, the ability to do the poem one better by putting into words the relevant responses we might have had if we'd been smarter and more feeling. These virtues have been evident in her writing over the past decade; we have looked forward to what she would say about the latest volume by a Lowell or a Merrill, and inevitably she has brought aid and comfort. Of course to call her our best reviewer of poetry is hardly a full enough labeling, since she has published full-length critical studies of Yeats, Stevens, and George Herbert (as well as writing on Keats and Wordsworth), and since her operations as a practical critic are everywhere displayed in the essays and reviews which make up this new volume.

What makes Vendler special may be suggested by a sentence from the foreword to this book where she tells how her career as a reviewer began in 1966 when she was asked to do an omnibus review of the year's poetry: "It seemed to me then a windfall, and seems no less to me now, as books arrive in the mail carrying the one form of writing that is to me the most immediate, natural, and accessible." I read this sentence as one through whose own hands a fair number of slim volumes have passed during the same decade, and realized how unlikely that I should ever speak about poetry, especially contemporary poetry, in such a way. There is in all Vendler's dealings with poetry (and she seldom has written about prose fiction) the pressure of an appetite, a feeling, and a love which—as it must do in her classroom teaching—renders her immune to academic or professional vices. Nothing is more obvious and natural to her than wanting and needing to share with others the "news" brought by important new poets, and by older ones whose voices one may have had difficulty hearing.

The unreticent forcefulness of Vendler's judgments and preferences invite argument, and I shall engage in a bit of that presently. But first let me name the pieces in this collection that are indispensable criticism, required reading in the years to come for anyone who cares about poetry. These are the reviews of Randall Jarrell's *Complete Poems* and Elizabeth Bishop's *Geography III*; the long appreciation of Frank O'Hara's collected poems, and the short one of A. R. Ammons's; the wonderful essay on Marianne Moore which obliges us to see her freshly; and the passionately argued case for Adrienne Rich's work which would convince me if anything could (and it can't) that she is a splendid poet. Most centrally there are the intrepid confrontations with difficult new books by Robert Lowell and James Merrill which appeared in the 1970s: with Lowell's books of sonnets, his *Selected Poems*, and *Day By Day*; with Merrill's *Braving the Elements*, *Divine Comedies*, and *Mirabell: Books of Number*.

Taken together, her writings about these last two poets seem to me the most distinguished work in the whole volume. The 50 or so pages on Lowell make an unqualified claim for the greatness of his later work, finding the life in the *Notebook* sonnets (now divided into separate volumes) to lie in "lawless free associations of the rocked and dangerous mind." Vendler sees Lowell's preceding books (*Near the Ocean* and *For the Union Dead*) as relatively less "fertile" than the sonnets (I'm not sure I can agree with any demotion of *For the Union Dead*, even relatively), which she says "contain the first legitimate continuance of Shakespeare's sonnets since Keats." Lowell's "free association, irritating at first, hovering always dangerously toward the point where unpleasure replaces pleasure, nonetheless becomes bearable, and then even deeply satisfying, on repeated readings." This judgment seems to me daringly made and also true, even more so when we encounter it framed and illustrated by quotations like this one from the poems:

> . . . I'm for and with myself in my otherness,
> in the eternal return of earth's fairer children,
> the lily, the rose, the sun on brick at dusk,
> the loved, the lover, and their fear of life,
> the unconquered flux, insensate oneness. . . .

While *Day by Day*, which she calls "a stern and touching volume," reveals Lowell finally as a writer "of disarming openness, exposing shame and uncertainty, offering almost no purchase to interpretation" whose last poems acknowledge exhaustion and expect death. As for the 30 pages on Merrill, here is a single sentence wonderfully describing the way his narratives are autobiographical but not "confessional":

> These poems are gripping because they are quiet and conversational: it is as though a curtain had been drawn aside, and we were permitted a glimpse of the life inside the house, a life that goes on unconscious of us, with the narrator so perfectly an actor in his own drama that his presence as narrator is rendered transparent, invisible.

photo of Helen Vendler by Janet Reider

If the pieces on Lowell and Merrill are the indispensable heart of the volume, Vendler's opening ones on Stevens (two of them independent essays) seem less so, perhaps because she already has had a full and definitive say about him. As the book's title suggests, Stevens is the presiding spirit of *Part of Nature, Part of Us*, perhaps a little too much so since—as with Kermode, Bloom, Hartman, and other hardcore Stevensians—Vendler constantly weaves phrases and lines from his poems into her own argument dedicated to showing their excellence. In "Apollo's Harsher Songs," for example, she aims to show that Stevens's poems are often "brutal" in their handling of experience, and she focuses on the

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violence felt in a poem titled "Chaos in Motion and Not in Motion" ("Oh, that this lashing wind was something more/ Than the spirit of Ludwig Richter . . . "). But her sentences about how humanly moving the poem really is refer us more to the verbal maze created by other Stevens poems than to "life": "As self and beloved alike become, with greater or lesser velocity, the final dwarfs of themselves . . . the poet sees dream, hope, love, and trust—those activities of the most august imagination—crippled, contradicted, dissolved, called into question, embittered." And soon afterward this interestingly argued brief for Stevens as a "poet of human misery" has recourse to another allusion, when she says his poems express "the late plural of the subject, whose early candor of desire reposes further down the page." The knowledgeable reader will have caught three references to other poems by Stevens which, taken together, don't make me feel more deeply about the humanness of "Chaos in Motion . . . " and its invoking of "Ludwig Richter, turbulent Schlemihl." Vendler's quotings here, untypically, make me feel that Stevens's poems reinforce themselves more as arcane textures of cross references than as moving gestures at real troubles in a human world. He seems to me still, even after her insistence that his poems contain great "amplitude of human vision," a chillier, more academic poet than she is willing to admit.

There may be a relation between Vendler's extreme admiration for these late poems (in which by "an incorporation of the imperfect and the tragic Stevens discovers the sublime") and her denigration of the later Eliot. In her review of *The Waste Land* manuscript she compares the "late work"—what must be *Four Quartets*, though she doesn't mention them by name—to Wordsworth's "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," and gives a friendly nod to Harold Bloom's "mischievous" remark that Pound and Eliot may turn out to be the Cleveland and the Cowley of our age. By contrast Stevens's late work is all "sublime," and that magic word (especially magical in New Haven) is almost compulsively summoned up by Vendler to turn what I had always thought a delicate piece of minor Stevens ("Not Ideas About the Thing But the Thing Itself") into something much deeper: "The scrawny cry [a phrase from the poem] of its emergent birth . . . represents Stevens' utmost sublime. It is a sublime of denuded language, a sublime of indicative effort . . . [a] transparently beautiful poem." And this is the same reader who, evidently, is untouched by the gloomy hills of London, the vast waters of petrel and porpoise, the river, the fishermen, and the children in the apple tree who populate Eliot's long poem. I would give up even the *true* sublime ("Sunday Morning," one of my all-time sublime hits, gets less than high marks from Vendler since it represents a "false sublime") in exchange for the sadness, the lifelikeness I find in *Four Quartets*.

She can provoke disagreement, and that is all to the good. The essay on Rich's poetry, with its comparisons to Herbert and Stevens, convinced me less that Rich is comparable to them than that Helen Vendler has been preoccupied with Herbert and Stevens. I don't see myself as one of the "crippled creatures" Vendler says Rich sees us all as; nor have I seen any indication in any of Vendler's writings that she sees herself as such a crippled creature. I finished the essay surmising that the "new generosity and new self-forgetfulness" prophesied for Rich's future poetry was really a whistling in the dark. And I was gratified then to read, in the next essay, a fine, unsentimental analysis of Rich's "rhetoric of violence . . . accompanied by a rhetoric of sentimentality" which Vendler found in the prose of Rich's book on motherhood, *Of Women Born*. To admire the poems yet to say this about the prose seems to me an impressive instance of critical integrity.

In conclusion, there is Vendler's humor, only occasionally indulged; but anybody who can say that W. S. Merwin "has been maintaining his starved and mute stance so long that one has a relentless social-worker urge to ask him to eat something, anything, to cure his anemia" gets an assent from me. *Part of Nature, Part of Us* belongs on the shelf (from where it will be taken down often) just to the right of *Language as Gesture* and *Poetry and the Age*, since in her brilliant fusion of reviewing and criticism Helen Vendler is the legitimate successor to R. P. Blackmur and Randall Jarrell.

William H. Pritchard

William H. Pritchard teaches English at Amherst College. His *Lives of the Modern Poets* will be published this spring by Oxford University Press.

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The Mind of Watergate: A Study in the Compromise of Integrity by Leo Rangell, M.D.

(W. W. Norton; $12.95)

The distinguished psychoanalyst Leo Rangell has written what he terms a "psychochronicle" of the Watergate period. The book is in the form of a journal which Dr. Rangell kept from the break-in of the Democratic headquarters in the summer of 1972 through January 1979, when John Mitchell left prison and Richard Nixon attended his first state dinner at the White House (in honor of Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping) since his ignominious departure. In his journal Rangell makes interpretations of the emotional life of the times, "analytic" judgments about the health and rationality of Nixon, his staff, and the American public itself. Measured and well reasoned, his account is informed by a humanistic concern for the moral and emotional well-being of America as a nation of active, participating citizens.

Psychoanalysis recently has been given a bad press by some critical intellectuals for supposedly espousing passive adaptation to the status quo. Rangell's book suggests that this is not a necessary stance for psychoanalysts to take. Psychoanalysis, after all, was founded by a critic of bourgeois morality upon which good citizenship depends. Rather than the materialist or rationalist notion of the always conlanguage of "secondary process" and "ego rationality." Reviving this Freudian tradition, Rangell uses psychoanalysis to probe not just neurosis but irresponsibility. We must first understand irrationality in the American psyche, he argues, in order to understand moral degeneracy in American politics.

The depth psychology of psychoanalysis allows Rangell to deepen the classical understanding of the rationality upon which good citizenship depends. Rather than the materialist or rationalist notion of the always conscious actor, he sees the citizen as a personality with conflicting needs and emotions. For this more human citizen, there is the constant danger of voluntary submission to authoritarian control, of "collusion" with the demagogic leader. The omnipresence of intrapsychic conflict means that "integrity" is a continuing challenge rather than an accomplished fact. Part child and part adult, the citizen constantly feels the temptation to surrender his autonomy to idealized authority. The American presidency encourages this ambivalence; its awesome power makes it the father incarnate. Citizens often feel guilt and anxiety about opposing the president, and just as young children hope their parents are perfect, so adult Americans have the "wish to believe" that their president is right.

These unconscious attitudes help to explain the peculiarities of Nixon's appeal. Liberal critics have rightfully accused him of "trickiness," since publicly he emphasized moralism and law and order, while engaging in a long history of lies, manipulations, and shady deals. This duality was, however, precisely Nixon's appeal. Those who followed Nixon and "believed" in him could, in psychological terms, have it both ways. As Rangell explains, they could unconsciously identify with Nixon's shadiness and vicariously avoid superego strictures in a way they could not do as successfully in their own lives. At the same time, they could deny this compromise of integrity on the conscious level by repressing their guilt and adopting Nixon's moralistic rhetoric.

The fantasy and wish-fulfillment built into this symbiotic relationship between Nixon and his followers, a group that once included a majority of American voters, illuminates aspects of Watergate that traditional explanations have obscured. We can better comprehend, for example, why *Washington Post* reports in the period before the 1972 election were met with such obstinate disbelief, while Nixon's own rather thin explanations were accepted at face value. Apparently the father-like position of Nixon placed many Americans in an exaggerated position of "innocent receptivity" in relation to his much hoped for assurances. After the facts of the case became more believable to many Americans, moreover, the same aura of projection and wish shielded the president. His subordinates could be impugned, but Nixon continued to emerge unscathed. Then, as this protection began to break down, there was a "compulsive blanking out" of the incriminating facts produced by the investigation. It was, Rangell observes, as if the evidence were simply too overwhelming, too frightening, to pursue. The possibility that Nixon planned the original break-in was forgotten, and the cover-up itself became the only apparent object of dispute. The statements of witnesses were forgotten, leaving the taped conversations as the only significant evidence. And once the 18-minute gap was discovered, this mystery in turn became the prime arbiter of guilt or innocence, making the rest of the tapes irrelevant.

The patient on the couch defends against difficult interpretations, accepting them eagerly one day and denying them the next. The public, Rangell believes, was in a rather similar position, hesitant and fearful at one stage of the crisis, aggressive and demanding at another. The haunting possibility remains that if the tapes had not been discovered, if the facts of Watergate had not been handed to the American public on pieces of celluloid that could not simply be wished away, the great anxiety over rebellion may have prevented us from acting at all. Rangell observes this process with detached sensitivity, allowing us to understand ourselves as we try to understand Nixon and the "American people."

Still, there are serious deficiencies in Rangell's analysis. These emerge from the special qualities of the method upon which his achievement rests. Ironically, psychoanalytic theory has an individualistic and materialist bias of its own, which often prevents it from recognizing the social and cultural resources upon which it draws for its success. Throughout this book, for example, Rangell denies that he is invoking any kind of value reference at all. He believes himself to be acting scientifically, unswayed by collective forces, thinking rationally in terms of the "facts" as they really are. His inability to recognize his moral reference stems from the theoretical inadequacies of the orthodox psychoanalytic framework; these theoretical problems, in turn, lead Rangell into important empirical errors.

The individualistic bias of psychoanalytic social thought affects Rangell's argument because he links the regressive and self-deceiving support for Nixon to the individual citizen's deference to "group opinion." Rangell constructs an antithesis between integrity and group involvement, between freedom and the acceptance of social authority. But this seems to me to be a false dichotomy, one produced by a psychologically reductionist theory, not

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by empirical reality itself. In a complex society, if every citizen were an epitome of psychic health there still would have to be large reservoirs of trust in social institutions. Even rational egos can communicate only through symbolic systems whose validity is accepted virtually without question. Can there be any doubt that the emerging critical, anti-Nixon movement was itself rooted in the trust of certain prestigious opinion sources and influential social authorities, that what was involved was not simply more "realistic" behavior but a new form of mass persuasion as well? Rangell too easily identifies his own anti-Nixon opinion, and that of the liberal left in general, with the healthy personality. Thus, Nixon is "obviously opportunistic," insincere, and artificial, and conservative political thought has "illogical," even paranoid roots. Those 25 percent of Americans who remained loyal to Nixon, in Rangell's opinion, must be less rational than the rest of us.

This theoretical individualism—rooting social changes in individual personality change—is combined with a casual materialism. Rangell believes that people changed their minds during the Watergate crisis simply because they finally had learned to see what was "really true," what was objectively valid. The enormous quantity of counter-stimulus forced the ego to recognize Nixon's guilt, for the ego has a basic rationality, an inherent consistency principle. This analysis, however, ignores the relative status of rationality: every judgment of rationality occurs in a cultural context. It is this symbolic context, not simply psychological proclivity, that determines whether individual judgment will be, and will appear to be, critical and rational.

The drama of Watergate was not simply the discovery of reality *per se*—of a series of crimes—but the redefinition of what constituted a crime, the labeling as deviant of political behavior that earlier had been accepted as normal. This redefinition depended upon crucial changes in dominant American morality. At first Watergate was rationalized by the backlash patriotism of the silent majority, an orientation forged in the 1960s in reaction to the cultural and political radicalism of minority activism, the New Left, and hippie movements. With the decline of these left-wing movements, however, it became acceptable for more and more Americans to adopt a critical perspective toward the government without feeling that they were unpatriotic.

FLOWERS ON YOUR BIRTHDAY

I'd have been here sooner, believe me,
If the short cut across Jefferson Bridge
Hadn't been clogged by a funeral.
I counted a hundred cars, most filled, it seemed,
With official followers, paying their respects to power.
Then, on the long way round, by the armory,
A burning house packed all the side streets
With fire-watchers. Half the city, it seemed,
Had nothing important enough to work on
That it couldn't be set aside for a fire.
I watched a fireman scramble to the third floor
To carry a girl down, and noticed that her dress
Was fringed like one of yours. And she looked like you,
A younger sister, smaller and more frail.
From there I drove straight here, bringing you
These flowers. See how fresh they are.
The black spots are merely soot from the fire,
Not symbols of anything, and will rinse away.
The afternoon, scattered with flowers, is all yours,
Wherever it leads, as you visit
The untraveled, outlying neighborhoods.
And this evening we can go to an old movie,
A romance from the war, where the girl's wooed
By three brave officers, English, Russian, American.
It doesn't matter which she decides on.
They're all fighting on the same side. Her tears
Aren't an old woman's tears for a life that's spoiled,
Thrown away on a clod, but the tears of the young
Shed because she can only choose one
Of the dear beleaguered lives held out before her.

Carl Dennis

With the defeat of McGovern, the last symbol of the "ultra-liberal" vanguard, the movement back toward a less particularistic civic morality was relatively complete. All that remained was the process of symbolic redefinition of the Watergate crime itself. In this process, epitomized by the Senate and House hearings, a reassertion of a more critical and "rational" attitude toward presidential authority took place, yet this assertion occurred in the midst of a highly symbolic and emotional ritual. Logic and realism were not, in fact, in particularly great evidence. The world was repainted in terms of a sharp and unrealistic division between good and evil. This time, however, evil was associated with the backlash values that had inspired Nixon rather than with the left wing, the polemical target Nixon had employed to rationalize his illegality. The imposition of critical rationality during Watergate resulted as much from the public's "wish to believe" in the integrity of Sam Ervin, Lowell Weicker, and Howard Baker as it derived from a newfound integrity in the public personality itself.

Even if this counter-explanation has some validity, it should not be taken as completely invalidating the points that Dr. Rangell has so skillfully and intelligently made. The morality of backlash politics does, perhaps, involve certain kinds of ego defenses rather than others, and it certainly involves greater deference to the most powerful authority in the land. Nonetheless, the fact that it simply cannot be reduced to neurosis points to the enormous intellectual difficulties that confront any effort to reconcile psychoanalytic and social thought.

Jeffrey C. Alexander

Jeffrey C. Alexander teaches sociology at UCLA. He is currently working on a study of the Watergate crisis.

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Brief Review

American Children by Ann Birstein

(Doubleday; $10)

Lois Ackerman is the kind of college student who, when paper topics are assigned, chooses to write on "The Humor of Character in Charles Lamb's Essays of Elia," rather than "Shelley's Swoon," "Sensuous Imagery in Keats," or "Byron as Romantic Hero." The other paper she has to occupy her Christmas vacation is "Hypercorrectness in the English Language." In fact, though, she's not the boring "Goody Two-Shoes" (her own characterization) you might think. When her Lamb paper is extravagantly praised by her professor, Lois is aghast; "It was terrifying. Was the woman mad?" However, as Lois wryly narrates this account of her college days, she proves that she really does have insight into the humor of character, especially her own, and that she is master of apt words.

Traditionally a Wasp-y genre, the ironic collegiate memoir here turns out to be more innocently funny than sophisticatedly mean as Lois recounts the fortunes of her mostly Jewish group at Medaglia, a city college in Queens, during 1946 and 1947. There are no ivy-covered dorms; instead Ann Birstein's characters rattle to their unsightly campus on interminable subway rides. Rather than trading social slights at every turn, they trade cultural aspirations. Each day they also have to rattle home, where they slam their bedroom doors against prying parents and dream of escaping to their own apartments, in Manhattan. Why they want to do that, their parents (mostly immigrants) don't understand, and will hear none of it.

The kids' aims have very little in common with their parents', and quite a lot in common with those of college students everywhere, in any decade. "Going to school might be the only thing I was good at," Lois reflects, "but I could less and less see myself as a scholar. It was all so musty and dreary, so selflessly devoted to the young when all I wanted to do now was grow up." Growing up, of course, is not musty and dreary. The excitements of 35 years ago turn out to be remarkably similar to those of today: sex, premarital to be sure; abortions, less clean and easy to come by then; a suggestion of professorial adultery, unconsummated; a whiff of marijuana, "tea" they call it; and perhaps most prominent, the revelation of homosexuality. Lois's first lover, Gerald Muster, is gay, we deduce before he tells her (at which point she admits, "to tell the truth there was a very attractive quality to Gerald's reluctance. It was so much more exciting than being pawed by some boy like Robert, who was always trying to make you"). So is her next remarkably hands-offish psychiatrist boyfriend; so, we are led to suspect, may be her crazy friend Leonora; so, just to crowd the scene with gays, is the talkative man at the next table in Schraffts, of all places. "Was it true," Lois wonders, puzzled but not bitter, "that for smart sensitive girls, the only available boys were fags?" It's never clear why that should be especially true of Lois's time and place, so the gay theme seems an unexpectedly contemporary touch.

There are also touches that mark this as a story of a past, postwar decade. Lois's brother returns from the army, disoriented and unmotivated. Her cousin, Josef, is extricated from an Italian DP camp at Lois's urging—only to be banished to Brooklyn when he turns out to be a creep who tries to paw her rather than a victim who inspires her to selfless devotion, as she'd hoped. And her mother is a hopelessly old world figure, according to Lois; Mrs. Ackerman lapses into a thick Yiddish accent whenever her daughter bullies her, which is constantly. These characters hover in the background, reminders of a larger displacement in the world beyond these kids groping their way in chaotic New York. But at heart *American Children* is a modest success story told as circumscribed, incisive satire. Lois can be depended on to come out on top in the wicked city, despite her remote prospects of finding an appropriate man.

Ann Hulbert

Correspondence, *from page 3*

government." The total incorporation of the Bill of Rights into the due process clause of the 14th Amendment as urged by Justice Hugo Black in his dissent in *Adamson v. Calif.* in 1947, has not been realized to date. The incorporation is now much broader (thanks to the Warren Court) but not total.

Richard T. Marquise, JD
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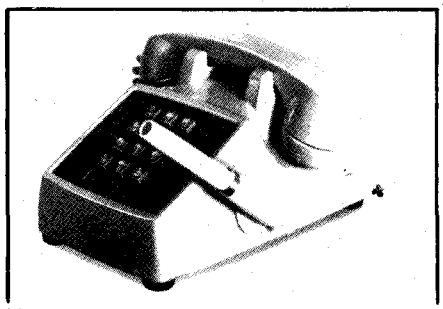

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Washington Diarist

Straws

James Reston, who's not ordinarily hard on presidents, wrote in the *New York Times* a week ago Sunday that Jimmy Carter is, at least in economic matters, the most disastrous occupant of the White House since Herbert Hoover. Tom Wicker, on the same page the same day, added eight years to the indictment, asserting that Carter was our most inept chief executive since Warren G. Harding. A more telling comparison, I believe, is with Calvin Coolidge, who was equally autistic in his understanding of the world. ("How could they tell?" asked Dorothy Parker when she learned that Coolidge had died.) In Carter's case, however, we've not been so fortunate as to have a mere cipher, innocuous and unobtrusive, in the Oval Office. Virtually everything that happens in public life—or doesn't happen but should—bears the distinctive markings of his frantic and shifting enthusiasms. He is the most narcissistic of Pollyannas: all may be wrong in the world, but all is quite right with Jimmy Carter. So we are now just about at double the old panic line of double-digit inflation, which is to say triple what it was when the Plains couple cockily strode down Pennsylvania Avenue to power. The couple remains cocky today. This, though the prime rate, which is the minimum even the very largest corporations and the very richest individuals pay for their borrowings, also climbs toward 20 percent. Into the fifth month, the hostages are still hostage. And we are still captive to Jimmy Carter, whom the admirers of lesser evil will soon be actively preferring as our captor for four more years. It's not the happiest evidence for the strength of the system.

Our response to Gerald Ford's decision not to run last week was evidence of just how bad things have gotten. When he left Washington three and a half years ago for the fairways of Palm Springs, we hazarded relief (*TNR*, January 15, 1977) that "at last our long national nightmare *really* is over." In bidding him farewell, we also said "good riddance" to all of Nixon's other inventions and discoveries; "clods," we called them, and "malefactors, reactionaries, zealots, egomaniacs, flunkies, lame-brains. . . ." The following week John Osborne reproached us in his White House Watch for what he called our "editorial snarl." I, at least, did not feel chastened. I couldn't then imagine that there'd be a day when I, and lots of other folks too, would think of Jerry Ford as an indispensable, if not truly desirable, political alternative. "Let my right hand wither," cries Jeremiah in *Lamentations*, "if I forget Jerusalem." I'm one of those whose right hand would wither were I to pull a Republican lever on election day. In Cambridge, a friend was about to start a "Socialists for Ford" committee. The other night at a party, when the news came that Ford had declined to run, a gloom descended over the room as if hope itself had been abandoned. If anything is an index of how low our expectations of political leadership have fallen, it is this grasping at Republican straws for deliverance.

It's not nice to hit someone when he's down. But Ted Kennedy has done a disservice to the country in running against Jimmy Carter. This disservice goes back a long way, all the way back to when he wasn't running against Jimmy Carter and was saying he wouldn't. The Kennedy-watchers rightly knew he would. The result was that others, Jerry Brown excluded, wouldn't. As long as Ted was in the bullpen no one else would play ball. It's barely conceivable that a Kennedy candidacy could have eluded the fate of being an inquest into the Kennedy character, but it wasn't likely, since Kennedy's first instinct was to challenge Carter's leadership qualities with his own. It had to come down to whom the people trust, and a recent poll tells us that the people trust Ted Kennedy even less than they trust Richard Nixon. The invidious comparison to Nixon on the question of trust, however unfair, points to something that everyone knew: Kennedy was bound to provoke very strong hostile feelings from a significant segment of the electorate—not against his politics necessarily, but against his person. Only someone blindingly driven for the presidency would have denied the people an opportunity for a Democratic option to Carter on the issues by putting forth the option of his own troubled and vulnerable self.

Robert Strauss's early morning phone calls to the opinion industry and the power brokers are the only assurance these days that there is actually a government functioning in Washington. He's persuasive enough, and vivid enough in his vernacular narratives, to still your contrary fears—until, that is, you read the afternoon editions of the papers. We are by now quite accustomed to failures of communication in this administration. But one newspaper last week stunned me out of my acquired habit of not noticing them: this was the case of the president failing to communicate with himself. After he stated at his press conference that he might renounce the signed (but not confirmed) SALT II treaty, some of his aides fanned out cross-country on the phones claiming he'd misstated his own policy. This is not reassuring. Nor is the fact that Carter cannot yet impose the disciplines of policy on staff whose views he has already repudiated. Ambassador Donald McHenry, for example, has been telling anyone who will listen—from individual reporters to a large and hostile crowd at the Harvard Law School—that there was nothing wrong with the UN resolution on Israel for which he voted and which the president subsequently disavowed. This administration's grasp of its own policies and its own bureaucracy is so weak that it's hardly surprising that ambassadors no longer feel obliged to represent the president's policies, but think themselves free to promote their own idiosyncratic visions of the national interest as if these were policy. As one of Jimmy Carter's most articulate backers put it, "Nothing would be done even if McHenry were to piss on the White House."

I have a dream. Oh, it's not a grandiose one like Dr. King's or anything. It's really just a procedural adjustment in the electoral process, first suggested to me by that shrewd and genuinely progressive labor leader, Lane Kirkland. Put a line on the bottom of the ballot, he said, for all of us who want "none of the above." If that line gets 50 percent of the vote the parties have to go back to convention and come up with other candidates.

M.P.

Coming:

Henry Fairlie on the Kennedys' Faded Glory.

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